BV 4253 G613l Goodell Life reveries

WITHDRAWN
by Unity Library
Unity School Library
Lee's Summit, Missouri 64063

DISCARDED BY S.P.S.I.M.

Life Reveries

By
CHARLES L. GOODELL, D.D.
Executive Secretary, Commission on Evangelism and Life Service Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Author of "Twilight Reveries," "Motives and Methods in Personal Evangelism," etc., etc.

DISCARDED BY S.P.S.T.M.
WITHDRAWN by Unity Library

NEW YORK CHICAGO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON EDINBURGH

UNITY SCHOOL LIBRARY
Unity Village
Lee's Summit, Missouri 64063

Copyright, MCMXXX, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 851 Cass Street
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 99 George Street

BV
4253
G613l

To My Radio Parishioners
With whom I have enjoyed a
delightful fellowship
I dedicate
This record of our meditations

FOREWORD

THE ministry of the pulpit is establishing itself more firmly from year to year as one of the great vital factors in the religious life of America. These sermons, which were delivered from June 1st to October 12th, were broadcast over WJZ and associated stations by the National Broadcasting Company. The services were conducted by the Greater New York Federation of Churches and were sponsored by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. It was the only service so sponsored that was given in sermonic form for the summer months. The reception accorded to Sabbath Reveries covered all the states of the Union and a part of Canada.

The purpose of these addresses was to establish, in the minds of those who listened in, a deeper conviction of the abiding verities of the Christian's faith. Knowing that there were tens of thousands of people who were perplexed in the midst of burdens which crush the soul, the desire was to make the addresses exceedingly practical. Thousands of letters revealed the fact that in home and hospital and asylum those who were burdened by age and physical limitations were listening in with eager hope that they might find something that would minister to human comfort and lift the burdens of "carking care." The vast numbers of letters received requesting that copies of these sermons should be sent, that they might be of permanent value for daily life, were very gratefully received, and the generosity of the twenty gentlemen making up the Com-

mittee on Sabbath Reveries made it possible for us to mimeograph these addresses and to send them to all who asked for them. I am sure that those who helped in this work and who supported the full musical program and general overhead expenses which were attendant upon these services can feel that it was an investment which has certainly paid them a hundred fold.

Our obligation is especially due to the National Broadcasting Company for giving the opportunity without cost to us to send out these Christian messages to all the people. So many requests came to us that these addresses should be available in book form that we are now complying with these requests. It will be understood that in the limited time appointed for these services not more than twenty minutes could be given to the sermon. Hence many matters which might have been profitably considered must be eliminated that the addresses might take on a directness and definite appeal otherwise impossible.

Let all Christian people unite in earnest prayer that the Radio, one of the mightiest instruments in modern life, may be greatly used of God for the spread of the Gospel which is to make stable the government of the people and insure the perpetuation of noblest Christian ideals.

Sincerely your Radio Pastor,

C. L. GOODELL.

New York City.

CONTENTS

I.	Fellowship With God	9
II.	Easter and Pentecost	18
III.	Tent-Makers	26
IV.	Dreams That Come True	34
V.	The Planting of a Nation	43
VI.	Can God Forgive Sin?	51
VII.	Taking Ship: Your Vacation Trip	59
VIII.	The Blind Man's Creed	67
IX.	Is the Young Man Safe?	76
X.	The Perils of Middle Life	85
XI.	The Treasures of Age	94
XII.	The Lord's Prayer	103
XIII.	Playing the Game	113
XIV.	Faith and Reason	122
XV.	In the Day of the East Wind	131
XVI.	Robbing God	140
XVII.	What Is Your Business?	149
XVIII.	The Eclipse of God	158
XIX.	Life's Mysteries	166
XX.	Our Prayer	174

I

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

"And Enoch walked with God."—GENESIS 5: 24.

HERE is a lifetime in a single sentence—a short biography and a great one. Enoch's father lived nine hundred and sixty-two years and begat sons and daughters, and his life's story is told in less than nine lines. The palm for longevity in the record of the human race as set forth in the Bible belongs to this family, for Enoch's son was Methuselah, who surpassed his grandfather in years and died at nine hundred and sixty-nine. The average age of those whose genealogy is reported from Adam to Noah was, with the exception of Enoch, about nine hundred years. Enoch alone passed out of sight in his boyhood, so to speak, for he was only three hundred and sixty-five years old when he walked into the country where the years go all unnumbered, and the inhabitants never grow old. It may have been that it was over Enoch that the proverb began—" The good die young."

If the biography of his ancestors is scanty, so also is that of Enoch. We should like to know where he lived and how. Was he a farmer or a shepherd? Was he a great Bedouin chief, or was he, as the Arabs say, " the fountain of learning " of his day and the father of many sciences? So far as these facts are concerned, the outline of his life is as bald and featureless as that of the men who preceded and followed him. We should like to know what his religious history was, so that we could call him a saint or a heretic, orthodox or heterodox. Did he worship in our way,

or in some other? Did he ever do anything that was bad that we might cast it up at him at the safe distance of five thousand years? Alas, we do not know enough about him even to find fault with his theology or his life, his theory or his practice. Here is the completed biography of the earliest saint and mystic of the human race—"Enoch walked with God." There is one limiting clause here to which I wish especially to call your attention. The record says, "Enoch walked with God *after he begat Methuselah.*" That sturdy old Scotsman, Alexander Whyte, says, "That is as much as to say that it was only after his first child was born, that Enoch really began to walk with God." As soon as he saw his first baby lying in its mother's arms, the contemplation of his responsibility so smote upon his soul that he became a changed man. He saw that an immortal soul had been given to him for training and it was that thought that made a saint of him. Has the same sense of responsibility laid hold upon your soul, father and mother? You who stand at the happy beginning of wedded life, have you looked into the face of your first little stranger and realized with Wordsworth "from whence he came trailing clouds of glory in light unspeakable"? Has he turned you from a selfish and sinful life, so that for the baby's sake you have made up your mind to walk with God? Again and again I have seen a flippant girl glorified into a Madonna as she looked into the face of her child. I have seen a selfish, heedless youth stand upright in the glory of the great responsibility which is laid upon a father and manifest a high and noble purpose. It would be a great thing for the world if, when the little children come, every father and mother marked time at the cradle until they caught step with God and then went to walking with Him, taking the children with them!

What kind of memories of their father do you suppose

Enoch's children had? Surely Methuselah himself never lived long enough to forget the one fact that was the greatest thing in his father's life—not the size of his flocks nor the greatness of his harvest, nor even his wisdom or his power, but that he walked with God. And your children will feel the same toward you if you do the same thing.

As I have said, this is a very partial and imperfect biography—only four words. I have a very vivid recollection of a never-to-be-forgotten day when, as a freshman in another college I went along the aisles in the Harvard Museum where the world's marvels were exhibited, wishing I knew something about them or that someone would tell me. I was conscious that a sweet-faced man stood at my side, whose smile would have changed the temperature of an Arctic night.

" My son," he asked, with a face fairly beaming, " do you know about these wonders, or would you like to have someone tell you about them? "

" I know nothing about them," I replied, " but I should like to learn."

Then he lifted a fossil trilobite and told me the story of its life. He said it was old by millenniums when the pyramids were built and Attic poets sang. Almost in a trance I listened to his wonderful revelations. Then an attendant approached and called my marvelous teacher away. A passer-by turned to me and asked, " Do you know that man? "

" No," I replied. " He is very wonderful but I do not know his name."

" That is the great Agassiz," my questioner replied.

Now Louis Agassiz could take the scale of a fish and with that as his unit of measurement draw the skeleton of the fish, tell what waters he swam, or he could take the bone of a mammal and from that reproduce the mammal, tell its

habitat and its method of life. Now if such things as that are possible in the material world, it may be that, although we have only four words to describe Enoch, we may yet be able to draw a tolerably correct portrait from such an imperfect tintype. If a man is known by the company he keeps, we can make up our minds pretty clearly as to what kind of man he must have been who consorted with God.

1. He certainly must have believed in God. He could not have done otherwise when he was keeping step with Him. A man cannot keep step with that which he does not see nor feel nor know. Whatever else the people remembered about Enoch, they remembered that he believed in God and they passed it on from father to son. You will remember that that was a day when history was not written but one generation told its facts to another. Thus it happened that a man who was writing the biography of men three thousand years after these events began his account by saying, "By faith Enoch ——" and as a further comment he says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him. For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

2. Again, how can two walk together except they be agreed? We know then by elimination the path which Enoch must have walked. It was not the path of his lusts or his appetites, for God would not have walked with him there. It was not the path of spiritual indifference or dalliance for you would never find the footprints of the Eternal along that road. God is never indifferent about the great verities of life and no one who walks with Him can be careless or indifferent as he faces these problems. We can therefore be sure that Enoch did not walk with the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful.

3. He walked with God. The word used here in the Hebrew means to keep company with—to walk back and forth. So the substance of this man's life is in the sentence, "He walked back and forth with God." Did you ever have some fellowship with some bosom friend, someone who was intellectually bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, someone who played a Jonathan to your David? I have had a few such in a long life and we have taken sweet counsel together and have spent blessed hours in fellowship in God's out-of-doors, and coming home I have said, "Won't you come in," and we have continued that fellowship until the iron tongue of midnight tolled twelve. Now that was what happened with Enoch—he walked back and forth with God until one day God said, "Enoch, we have been walking back and forth so long, you might as well come in." And Enoch said, "I don't mind if I do."

4. I suppose Enoch kept right along with his business. I cannot think of any place where God would be so likely to go with a man as in the path of his daily duty. There is nothing to tell us what sort of workman Enoch was, but I should be willing to stand sponsor for any man who walked back and forth with God, especially if he had kept it up for some centuries. If Enoch was an employer of labour and was walking with God, I should know that he would give a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. I should know that his employees would not be so many human hands to help him, but behind each set of hands there would be a heart and a life and Enoch would be interested to see that the best that could possibly be done was done for each man. If Enoch worked for someone else, I should be equally sure that he would do a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. He would not try to beat his employer out of time or money. He would be as faithful to his task as if he owned the store or the mill or the farm himself. I

should know that he would put conscience into everything he did. Now if you will think about that for a moment, you will see that that attitude of mind would solve the vexed problems of to-day. If labour and capital would go to walking with God, their conflicts would end in a perfect fellowship. What a blessed thing it would be to realize that God was with us in all the little concerns of life. For every wife and mother to realize that her hearthstone was a pedestal high enough for God and man and angels to see and rejoice in her noble life, to feel that in the little petty efforts and anxieties which are incident to the daily round of toil, God is not only interested, but He is walking with her—that makes common things sublime, that permeates every ordinary experience with eternal delight. Nothing is humdrum any more, nothing is common or unclean. One can perceive the sweet significance of the words—

"Who sweeps a room as for her Lord
Makes that and the action fine."

Anybody's house may be a Bethel—a house of God—and the humblest work may be an act of worship, for wherever we are and whatever we do, it is possible therein to serve God and to walk with Him.

5. What do you suppose they talked about as they walked arm in arm? If the Arabs are right and Enoch was an astronomer, I think I know how he got his astronomy. If he was an artisan, I know how he found out the secrets of the metals. If he was a lover of buds and flowers, I know where he got his botany. What joy it must have been to talk about them with Him who made them! I suppose Enoch had many questions to ask about life's experiences. For all I know, he may have had physical pain. Think of having rheumatism or neuralgia for three hundred

years! And he had to talk to God about that. How our aches and pains distress us and fill us with dreary forebodings! In one of my parishes one of the brightest women I ever knew was suddenly smitten with disease and in a little while became totally blind. Her health was partially restored, though her eyesight was never recovered. I saw her groping her way endeavouring to reach the chancel rail where I stood. I reached out my hand to help her and said, " Dear sister, some day we shall understand all about these things. Some day our second sight will come and God will make all things plain." With a smile that was born in heaven transfiguring her face, she lifted her sightless eyes toward me and said, " If I am so happy as to get to heaven I shall let bygones be bygones and never trouble the Lord to make any explanation whatever." You remember the triumphant faith of Helen Hunt Jackson—

"Like a blind spinner in the sun
I tread my days,
I know that all my threads will run
Appointed ways.
I know each day will bring its task
And being blind no more I ask.
But listen, listen, day by day
To hear their tread
Who tear the finished web away
And cut the thread
And bring God's message in the sun,
'Thou poor, blind spinner, work is done.'"

Perhaps they talked about their neighbours as long ago as that, although I hope they did not, and Enoch said one day, " They lie in wait for my soul." But a little later he was able to say, " Thou deliverest me from mine enemies, therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord." It may be that one day Enoch could hardly walk at all and he could not speak for his heart was sore distressed. It may

be that he stumbled over a narrow grave on the dusty plains such as I saw an Arab father digging for his little child by the waters of Merom, but God said to Enoch, "Suffer little children to come unto me," and when Enoch knew that God had the little child, he never wept any more for he said, "If my baby is with thee, what more can I ask?" Hadn't we better say the same thing?

But what was the end of that walk of three hundred years? Well, that is the beautiful thing about it—it never had an end. My text says, "He was not for God took him." If that was the only record, you might say that that was a poetic way of saying that Enoch died. But in the New Testament the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews takes up the story and says, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death." If this record is true at all, we must take it, it seems to me, as the first announcement of the blessed doctrine of immortality. Some have said that there is nothing in the Old Testament about immortality, but it seems to me it takes a dense prejudice and a closed mind to say that. Enoch had been walking and talking with God for three hundred years and he was not through. God wanted him a little closer and gave him a distinction there was no record of up to that time. It would seem to be true that communion with God here is the prophecy of communion with Him forever. If you practice the presence of God, you will never be separated from Him. Those were evil times in which Enoch lived and he seemed to be about the only man of his time who was God-trained. But when you come to think of it, most of God's heroes have served Him in a wicked generation. It was so of Noah, of Joseph and Moses, of Elijah and of Daniel. How this text of mine shines out like a Kohinoor among pebbles, or like a rose in a dusty desert. Here in this chapter men with long names lived and died—

that is all—but this man "walked with God." That is really the only thing that counts.

Our life is woven of the same stuff as Enoch's and we can wear it as well as he did. The immortal life is nothing more than an endless walk with God in the ageless and the tearless land. If we do not walk with God here, how shall we catch step with Him in the life to come? Are you troubled about the eternities, do you say, "I do not know what to believe about creeds and dogmas"? Do you say you doubt? There is one thing you do *not* doubt—you know that he who walks with God walks a safe and happy path. Say ye to the righteous, "It shall be well with him." No man disputes that anywhere. Say ye to the wicked, "It shall be ill with him." Nobody in earth or heaven or hell disputes that. If that is so, put your doubts in your pocket and go to walking with God and, some day, when you feel for your doubts, you will find they are gone.

II

EASTER AND PENTECOST

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."—COLOSSIANS 3: 1.

I SUPPOSE if you were to ask the average man what is the greatest day in the Christian year, he would be quite likely to say " Easter," and he would be apt to say that because he believes in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and joins the Christian Church in repeating concerning Jesus " That He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; that He rose the third day, that He ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty." If a man doubt that, it is fair to say that the world has been troubled, not so much with its intellectual processes, as with its religious sympathies and tendencies.

A great philosopher has said, " If we had heard that a man had died in a neighbouring town, and had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, we should not pay any attention to it. We should not believe the report, we should not even disbelieve it. We should ignore it and feel somewhat impatient if someone asked us to consider the case. Yet the Christian Church still repeats its creed concerning Jesus: 'He suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried. He arose again from the dead and ascended into heaven.' Now why do we treat these cases differently? " The answer is that in the case of Jesus of Nazareth the miracle of His resurrection does not stand alone. It is only one item in a long count. The whole

system of Christianity is supernatural in its idea and in that sense miraculous. Christianity proceeds on the basis of an immanent God, interesting Himself in the affairs of men, fitting a world for them to inhabit, watching their growth from infancy to adolescence and to manhood, giving them twilight intimations of the truth such as they could comprehend, and with an enlarged comprehension, which finds its center in their understanding of one God, He sends to them the patriarchs and the prophets, and "in the fulness of time" He sends His only begotten Son. When a system so stupendous as that is set before us it is little less than intellectual debauchery to haggle away over questions as to whether a prophet could make an axe swim, or whether the disciple caught a fish with a piece of money in its mouth.

If we are essentially irreligious and have no sympathy with humanity searching after God, there is no use talking to us about the Resurrection. But if one believes that our race is and always has been in the hands of God who has some great and noble purpose to work out in our lives, then our minds are not closed in advance against the presence of a living God in history and in the lives of men. With such an open-mindedness the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the corner stone of the Christian faith, and there was a far-reaching emphasis of an elemental truth in the Apostle's words, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

The disciples claimed that they had experienced a fact. Now so long as a matter is a matter of theory, one guess is as good as another, but when a fact strides into view, then every theory must adjust itself in harmony with the fact. But the evidence of eye-witnesses, great as it is, is supplemented by a greater. The Apostle in my text speaks of a vital union on the part of every believer with the Resur-

rected Christ. He affirms that it is the possibility of every Christian to know Him and the power of His Resurrection, so that his hope in Christ, in His resurrection and in immortality, depends not on an argument concluded, but on an experience begotten. " If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." If you will read this third chapter of Colossians you will see the immense meaning of that clause. You are not your own, you belong to another. It is Christ in you which is your hope. Of what use is it for one to say " I believe in the life everlasting " and continue to live for the things which perish? Now in a time when commercialism and materialism seem to triumph over spiritual aspirations both in the Church and out of it, listen to the message which Christ gives to those who wish to have power to work out the great ideals for which He stands. Those ideals are not wrought by some passing emotion. They are the product of conviction and persistent toil, but also of an enduement of power, which is greater than we of ourselves could ever possess. It was for that reason that Christ said, " Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power." It was on the day of Pentecost, in answer to the preparation which Christ had demanded, that that power came and wrought such a change in those disciples that Pentecost may fairly be called the birthday of the Church. To-day is the nineteen hundredth anniversary of that great event and all around the world it is being observed. Nearly all the denominations of the Protestant Church in America are giving it to-day an emphasis greater than it has ever had in the history of the Church. It is to its power as the vitalizing force of Easter itself and all the significance of that day to which I wish to call your attention.

Principal Jacks talks about the lost radiance of the Christian Church and men are asking how can the Church

recapture the radiance and rapture which the Church of the New Testament received, and in the strength of which it went forward to its glorious triumphs. Stanley Jones says, " There is in Christianity a lost chord and that lost chord haunts us. Until we get it back our spiritual lives will be more wistful than winsome, more plaintive than passionate. That lost chord is Pentecost." He says, " The Church is living between Easter and Pentecost. Easter stands for life wrought out, offered. Pentecost stands for life appropriated, lived to its full, unafraid and clearly and powerfully witnessing to an adequate way of human living. The Church stands hesitant between the two, hence comparatively impotent." It is not too much to say with Stanley Jones that " through Pentecost Jesus became not merely the Christ of the Galilean Road nor even the Christ of the Emmaus Road, but the Christ of Every Road. He was there, He was everywhere, He was within. The greatest hour of human history had dawned. God was utterly available to human need; the barriers were all down."

The Christian Church is face to face to-day with this great anniversary, not so much to study the fact of it historically as to experience it in individual life, to pray that the same thing may happen now which happened 1900 years ago, and so changed the life of individuals and of the world. No man can be of much use to the Church and to the world in the highest things of the spirit until he has found his Pentecost. As it was with the disciples, so was it with Savonarola, with Martin Luther, with John Knox, with Bunyan and with Wesley, and so in later times with Finney, with Judson and with Livingstone, with Moody and with Drummond; the first requisite for Pentecost was a waiting before God until something should take place. The disciples were not at liberty to undertake anything until that something had actually transpired. To the

disciples querying about temporal powers and kingdoms, Jesus said in substance, "Times and seasons are in the hands of God. What as a company of selfish, ignorant and frightened men and women could you do face to face with an angry and lustful world? You want power. You will have it but on terms of which you are yet unaware. All power is given unto me. But you cannot have it until the Spirit comes. Wait for it. It is your life. Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

And what does history say? That company kept their tryst with one another and with God; with utter consecration and appeaseless soul-hunger they waited until something happened, or better yet, until Somebody came. With a changed nature and a changed life they changed the face of the world. Why not the same thing now? We are especially interested in schemes and plans and programs, but the order is Power first, program and propaganda afterward. It is a fearful thing when, having no Gospel, one hopes to save the day by a big program, and having no power, one hopes to develop some progress through a fresh display of wit. Why try to push a dead engine up grade a mile a day with a crowbar? Why not get up steam in the boiler and draw a hundred freight cars a hundred miles an hour? No *program* can take the place of spiritual *power*.

We need to remember now that anything may happen in a world where the Holy Spirit is abroad to reveal to the individual heart the things of God. You are talking about the rediscovery of Christ. How will that be done? Not by some rereading of prophecies, not by some new adjustment of philosophies and theologies, but by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. He will take of the things concerning Christ and make them plain to the world. "He is the Spirit of Truth and He will guide you into all truth. He

shall glorify me for He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you." He was to be the Comforter, and that does not mean simply the Consoler, but as the word implies—Strength-giver.

In a time of unhappy divisions in Church and state, what is more needed than a Pentecost, where those who have long been separated by petty divisions which have been the scandal of Christendom should get together with one accord in one place. There is but one thing that can bring that full accord and that is that spirit which importunes the Throne of Grace to meet all its longings and needs.

We are interested in many things in connection with the Christian Church. Some of them are very good, but they are not fundamental and life-giving. Some are saying, "I believe in fine architecture," and there is no place where art can be more helpful than in the Church of God. Art should be the handmaid of worship. All that I am glad to acclaim with you, but may I be bold enough to ask of what value will the finest architecture be if there is no Shekinah there and if the fires on God's altar have gone out? There are those who are constantly saying that what we need is keener and more intellectual preaching in the pulpit, but what will the finest rhetoric and the deepest thinking amount to if there is no Christ, the Saviour of Men, in the message? I believe in social fellowships and the blotting out of all class distinctions. All that is fine, but what will it all amount to if there is no spiritual brotherhood and no testimony of Christian experience to lift men up to God? There is something greater, I believe in the Holy Ghost.

I am hopeful of my age and hopeful of the people. I know that worldliness, like a flood, has swept down upon us, that materialism has gripped our people, that our money

has increased faster than our sense of duty and stewardship, but somewhere someone will say, "Here am I, send me." Somewhere somebody will make a burnt offering of fortune and self on the altar of service. Somewhere the people will begin to sing, "The morning light is breaking, the darkness disappears." I believe all this because I believe in the Holy Spirit. Some day the dark places will become light, saints will be made out of selfish men and women and the Kingdom of God will be set up in the hearts of men.

The call to the Church on this day of Pentecost is imperative. Many of our great denominations in the last few weeks in Conferences and Assemblies have voted to make the coming quadrennium, beginning with this very day, a period of unexampled consecration on the part of the Church. It is not a time for apologetics. One of our clearest thinkers has said, "Our faith does not need protection, it needs proclamation." The whole matter of the Christian religion is not to be settled on the hot fields of debate but in the quiet walks of daily life. Christianity is a thing not to be argued about but to be lived out. "If any man will do my will, he shall know the doctrine." It is for the coming of that spiritual power that we plead today, for each man and woman to find a Pentecost where victory over the world and all that is evil would bring a new life of fellowship divine. "Fire" and "power" are the words that fitted the first Pentecost, the cleansing of the heart from all evil purposes and the infilling of the soul with the power which no earthly circumstances could overwhelm.

If the Church was right in the matter of its observance of the nineteen hundredth anniversary of Pentecost, we are now entering that glorious period when by a power which men could not understand, and with a zeal which no op-

position could halt, the good news of salvation from sin was heralded by those who had experienced it, until the glorious chapters of the Acts of the Apostles took their place in the history of the Church to be its challenge and inspiration forever.

Let me recall Gerhardt's great hymn which Toplady translated:

"Come thou out of all donations
God can give or we implore,
Having thy sweet consolations
We need wish for nothing more—
Come with unctions and with power;
On our souls thy graces shower.
Author of the new creation
Make our hearts thy habitation!"

It would change the face of America to-day if those who are listening to me this moment would bow their heads and each one for himself would pray:

"Holy Spirit, dwell with me!
I myself would holy be.
Separate from sin I would
Choose and cherish all things good.
And whatever I can be
Give to Him who gave me Thee."

III

TENT-MAKERS

"For by their occupation they were tent-makers."
—ACTS 18: 3.

"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."—HEBREWS 11: 10.

PAUL was a member of that great fraternity who work with hand or brain. He was a tent-maker. I often thought of him as I went in my youth to the sail-makers' loft and saw the men who drove the needle with a thimble, not on their finger but in the palm of their hand. His was a meditative occupation, like that of a shoemaker. The story of the great shoemakers is the story of some of the profoundest intellectual victories and spiritual conquests of the ages. William Carey, George Fox and Lloyd George were shoemakers and Coleridge wrote, "Shoemaking has given to this world a larger number of eminent men than any other craft." Busy making the black tent of the Arab, Paul meditated on the eternities. He wrought for the nomads. The wandering Arab set up his tent for a night, perhaps with his sheep around him, and, when the pasturage failed, struck his tent and moved on. The old patriarchs were nomads themselves. That wonderful chapter of heroes, the Eleventh of Hebrews, tells how Abraham was a dweller in tents with Isaac and Jacob, but he was going somewhere—to a place which he should after receive for an inheritance. Through the smoke of his altar he saw the city which was afar off, and the great historian declares "he looked for a city which hath founda-

tions, whose builder and maker is God." From a wanderer on the face of the earth, he looked forward to the happy time when he should be a citizen of the city of which God was the Architect.

1. There is a sense in which we are all tent-makers, and God Himself has set us the example. Take the earth itself —once it was without form and void. Once volcanoes made oceans into atmospheres of mist, but after long millenniums chaos changed to cosmos. Your geologists and your biologists will show you how one age made way for another, until at last the earth was carpeted with green and became fit for men, and a race of men appeared fit for the great tasks which nature had laid upon them. The old order changed, giving place to new.

2. What was true in the case of the earth was true especially of the nations that peopled it.

"Where are kings and empires now
Of old that went and came?"

The stars that we look at to-day watched the founding and the passing of Babylon and Nineveh. They watched the Pyramids rising from the Libyan Desert and they watched kings and pharaohs laid in their sarcophagi. It is a bloody path along which the nations passed. New dynasties arose and others superseded them. On the red battlefield many a sun went down in blood and the twinkling stars saw the rising of a new power.

From Salamis to Marathon and Runnymede and the far Argonne

"Those mounts of anguish number how each generation learned
One new word of that grand credo which in prophets' hearts hath burned
Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face to heaven upturned."

Still the silent Pyramids stand but the dynasties which reared them are gone and forgotten. Still men walk through the forum and stand amid the arches of the old Coliseum, but the barbarians from the north overwhelmed the mistress of the world and dragged her generals at their chariot wheels.

Nations to-day are in the flux. In a generation we have seen them rise and fall. What will be left of them in another century or even another generation, who can tell?

3. We are tent-makers ourselves in our own bodies. We are changing every day. If you are fifty years of age, you have had seven or eight bodies already.

"How are you physically?" asked an inquiring friend of John Quincy Adams.

"Poorly enough," replied the ex-President. "The old tenement is going toward decay. The thatch gets thinner every day and they that look out of the windows are darkened. The house is shaky and the timbers are bent, and so far as I can see the owner does not intend to make any permanent repairs. I must make my plans to move out, but the move will be to a better house—a house not made with hands."

We are changing physically with every passing day, and now the experts tell us that the age at which we begin to grow old is not fifty or forty but twelve. At twelve we reach the apex of our ability to resist disease, and from twelve to twenty we are at the top and then we begin to go down hill. Athletes are at their best in their late teens or early twenties. A man in baseball at twenty-eight is an old man. In the thirties our teeth and our eyes begin to bother us; at forty, if not before, we begin to grow gray and must put on glasses; our muscles are set and our bones are growing more brittle; the light is fading out of our eyes: so that the ancient declaration is true—"The grind-

ers cease because they are few and those that look out of the windows are darkened." Renan said, "The saddest thing in life is that it is in constant flux. Nothing is good enough to last forever."

4. What is true of the body is true of the mind. Our intellectual processes and attainments are changing. In that marvelous thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians there is a smiting story of tent-making: "Prophecies fail, tongues cease, knowledge vanishes away." What strange intellectual tents men have set up and sought to dwell in: It makes the scholar of to-day smile to see what the scholars of yesterday said and believed. Our intellectual theories and prophecies go to the scrap heap. A librarian said to me the other day that the average life of a book on science is only fifteen years. It was only yesterday in the history of the world when men believed the Copernican theory and made the whole universe geocentric. A little while before it was said that the earth was flat and that it rested upon the back of a tortoise, and the Greeks said that the moon was about the size of the Peloponnesus. The world saw magic changed to medicine, alchemy to chemistry, astrology to astronomy. What strange vagaries men believed and went to the stake because of their belief. All this was true in science, in philosophy, and alas in theology. What seemed a few centuries ago to be scientific truths for which scholars would be willing to die, hang now like last year's bird nests on the boughs of time. The impossible has come to be the expected, and we ought to be careful how we prophesy in science or philosophy.

5. What a lesson in tent-making is our whole system of human invention. Go to the patent office at Washington, notice the evolution of the sewing machine and the mower and the typewriter, contrast the passing from the old lumber wagon to the prairie schooner, the phaeton, the

railway train, the automobile, and the airplane. The telegraph was the marvel of its age, and then the telephone more wonderful still, and now the trackless ether becomes the sounding board for God and men. H. G. Wells predicts that in a generation all the activities of the busy world will be driven by invisible currents of power and the whole industrial machinery will have gone to the scrap heap.

6. Our homes, like our bodies and our minds, build their tents only for a night. We set up our little home, we hang the crane, and little children come. The cradle and the crib and the trundle bed are full; then beside the armchair we place the high chair, and then one chair after another is filled and the table enlarges from year to year; but at last the old folks slip away, one chair after another is set back to the wall and at last the home is broken up. Jean Ingelow sings:

"I had a nestful once of my own,
Oh, happy, happy I!
Right dearly I loved them,
But when they were grown,
They spread out their wings to fly."

So out of the old home they went to make homes for themselves, and some slipped out of our sight to the house not made with hands.

"I pray thee what is my nest to me, my empty nest?
* * * * * * *
Nay, but the port where my sailor went,
And the land where my nestlings be.
That is the home where my thoughts are sent
The only home for me, ah me!"

In his loneliness, Tom Hood sings:

"Where are the friends that to me were so dear
Long, long ago, long ago."

Longfellow gives us the " Tales of a Wayside Inn," but the festivities of the night are soon over:

"Farewell! the stately landlord cried.
Farewell! each parting guest replied.
But little thought that nevermore
Their feet should pass that threshold o'er."

And when he tells the story of those happy days, he adds:

"Two are beyond the salt sea waves
And three already in their graves."

And alas sometimes the house begins to crumble at the top. You will remember how Emerson attended Longfellow's funeral. He gazed long at the benign old face in the casket, and at last turned sadly away, saying to his daughter and to those who stood reverently by: " The gentleman we are burying to-day was a sweet and beautiful soul, but I have forgotten his name."

The busiest of us all, crowded by opportunities and by friends, come at last to say:

"I seem like one who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted;
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed."

If this were the end of it all, what an unspeakably bitter thing it would be, and the saddest thing on earth would be to grow old; but listen to the concluding part of my text: " For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

" A house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." I saw where dynasties had fallen in the East and dust had been their winding sheet. As I looked into the sky across

the tops of the Pyramids, the same stars that saw Joseph take on the royal purple and Pharaoh put on sack cloth; the same sun that watched Socrates in the Academia and Abraham on his long pilgrimage; the same moon that looked into the prison cell of Socrates; still looked at me. They watched the armies of great nations, but " gone their purple show, restless centuries ago." Even the sun and moon and stars shall themselves pass away. Some day they will strew the ashes of their undoing along the path where once they blazed in glory. But one thing never fails. In the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians the Apostle affirms that though prophecies are done away and tongues shall cease and knowledge shall vanish away, one thing never fails, it never grows old, fire cannot consume it, floods cannot overwhelm it; love never fails! The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Suns and systems may fade and pass but you cannot put out love's beacon. You cannot hack a sunbeam with a sword.

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at last art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!"

The things which are seen are only the scaffolding. Behind that scaffolding a great building is going up which is to last forever. One day death, the Iconoclast, will come and take down the scaffolding that the structure may not be marred or handicapped by it. Then shall the permanent appear. Some will tell you that Jesus was talking much about this world and little about the next. No greater falsehood was ever proclaimed. He is always dealing in

eternal things. His parables had their settings here but their conclusions there. When He knew He was talking with His disciples for the last time and therefore must speak on those things which were supreme, every sentence was linked to the eternities. Here we are tent builders. There is the " house not made with hands, eternal and in the heavens." He is always saying that God is the builder. " In my Father's house are many mansions." Here, we sing, " I'm a pilgrim, and I'm a stranger, I can tarry but a night." There, " They hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." And so we sing:

" O God our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home! "

So with high and holy hopes I have stood by thousands of graves to say, as Moffat so beautifully translates it, " I know that if this earthly tent of mine is taken down, I get a house from God, made by no human hands, eternal in the heavens." Wordsworth wrote " Trailing clouds of glory do we come from God, who is our home." A less spiritual poet would have written " from heaven which is our home." The psalmist and Wordsworth are at one and both realize it is God and not heaven which is our home for only He can make heaven.

IV

DREAMS THAT COME TRUE

"Behold this dreamer cometh. . . . We shall see what will become of his dreams."—GENESIS 37: 19, 20.

THE true Oriental sets much store by his dreams, and the Bible, containing the record of Oriental life, has much to say about dreams and dreamers. This Joseph is called by his brothers, "the master of dreamers." He was evermore reminding them of visions which appeared unto him in the night. The more he dreamed, the more his hard-hearted, hard-headed brothers hated him, and when he dreams that their sheaves bow down before his sheaf—that they pay obeisance to this dreaming mystic—it is more than they can stand, and so he goes to the pit and to far-off Egypt, to captivity and imprisonment. But the Bible will have it that his dreams came true. In fact, the whole Book seems to be pretty largely in sympathy with men who dream. Later poets have sung with Dryden:

"Dreams are but interludes which fancy makes,—
When monarch Reason sleeps, this mimic wakes."

There are doubtless some of you, with the Mystic in your soul, who are saying in these days "knee deep in June":

"No, no, from the street's rude bustle,
From trophies of mart and stage,
I would fly to the wood's low rustle
And the meadow's kindly page;

Let me dream as of old by the river
And be loved for the dream alway;
For a dreamer lives forever,
And a toiler dies in a day.''

To-day we are lifting our vision to those great dreams which have filled the heart of the Ages, and where indeed the dreamer does " live for ever."

The dreams of the Bible, for the most part, come true, and it does not hesitate to say that many of its so-called " dreams " are visions sent from God. Joseph's dream is fulfilled, and in the land of his sojourn, he becomes not only a dreamer, but an interpreter of dreams. The dream of the butler and the baker, and of Pharaoh himself, seem like a warning voice of God, and come true. The Bible says that " The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream." If he had always followed the lesson of that dream, how happy it would have been for him and for Israel!

I suppose we are all of us dreamers, and at times in our lives we have felt that " coming events cast their shadows before," that in some way facts have come to us which afterward wrought themselves into the fabric of history. But it is also true that when the night is gone and daylight appears, we are quite inclined to smile at our dreams and perhaps to call them " Children of the night, of indigestion bred."

We are fallen upon an age when a certain class among us is fain to relegate to the land of dreams and visions, all those matters which relate to the spiritual and the unseen. They go so far as to tell us that God Himself is but a dream; that all this talk of present and future condemnation is but a distempered imagining; that religion itself is but the vapouring of the mind; that all our dreams of future blessing shall fade away.

In one of his admirable essays, Dr. W. V. Kelly calls attention to the effort of materialism to banish the dreams of mankind. It will insist that all these dreams of the future, of everything that flows out of God and religion, are not, as men have sung, revelations of truth vouchsafed by some supernal power, but they are hallucinations generated from within, so that religion in all its genesis and nature, belongs in the category of dreams. Thompson sang; years ago:

> *"The chambers in the house of dreams*
> *Are fed with so divine an air,*
> *That Time's hoar wings grow young therein,*
> *And they who walk there are most fair."*

But the materialists tell us that there is nothing divine, and no reality in "the house of dreams;" that the mind is the subject of its own hallucinations; that it lives in a world of the unreal, and that none of its dreams will ever come true. Religion itself, and all our beliefs, according to the agnostic school, are only our "dreams," to which no one knows that there are any corresponding realities. They tell us that we have our dreams because we are what we are, and that there is no relation between our dreams and our facts. Christian creeds are the formula in terms of dreamland, of imaginings spontaneously produced and generated in our own minds. All faith is but the vapouring of a dream, and the God of righteousness, who will not regard iniquity, and who punishes the wrongdoer, is a creation which we have made to keep a bad world in check, as a mother threatens to send the Bogie man after a wilful child. So, it has been the fashion, for millenniums as well as for generations, to say, when any prophet or honest soul has arisen to call man's thought to God and duty, "Behold, this dreamer cometh! * * *

Let us see what will become of his dreams." Christianity's story, viewed merely through the eyes of the materialists, always had a look of the improbable, and its program seemed preposterous. A great many critics of to-day seem to have the notion that the Christian program was accepted without protest at the beginning, and that all this talk about the unreasonableness of miracles is something that has sprung up in the greater light of the superior knowledge of to-day. Every such critic ought to be told that he is only a repeater of criticisms which were made a good deal stronger and with much greater volume, seventeen centuries ago; and that the criticism of to-day is only a rehash of what the facts overthrew when Nero was scraping his fiddle as Rome burned and charging the conflagration upon the Christians, or when Diocletian was fattening wild beasts with Christian blood in the arena. What had a Galilean Teacher to do with the ages? How could they suppose that they themselves would be only remembered in coming generations, because they happened to cross His path; that the Son of a carpenter would utter words that would be eternal and carry a meaning profounder than any other human speech? Could you ever think of a dream that would be less likely to come true than a dream like that? Pliny wrote to Trajan concerning it: "The contagion of that superstition has penetrated not the cities only, but the villages and country; yet it seems possible to stop it." But Pliny was mistaken. The new faith which Jesus brought, ought, by all earthly calculations, to have failed at the outset, but somehow "it failed to fail, and no power *could* stop it, or *can* stop it."

1. Hidden in the Gospel of the Nazarene are four dreams. Men before His advent had had those dreams, and had longed for the fulfillment of them. Long ago they groped after God. They saw the sun rise and they said: "This

is God," and they worshipped the sun. But he disappeared and their heart was sore. The moon, queen of the night, rode out in her silver car, but she, too, sank out of sight. The stars glowed, but they also paled and faded away. And still the heart of the dreamer cried out after God. They set up their altars "To the Unknown God," greater than Zeus and all those who held their revels on Olympus. It looked as if the dream would never be realized, but the Apostle declared to those very worshippers: "Him whom ye ignorantly worship, declare I unto you." "It is He who hath made us, and not we ourselves." "In Him we live and move and have our being." The dreamer in Ur of the Chaldees, in far-off Babylon and in the land of the Nile, "where the palm nods to the lotus and it seems always afternoon," all caught a vision of a God of yearning and of love, who was of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, but who "would not that any should perish," and that dream at last came true in Him who said: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." "Whoso hath seen me hath seen the Father." Skepticism may still continue to blind its eyes.

> *"Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place*
> *(Portentous sight!) the owlet Atheism,*
> *Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,*
> *Drops his blue-fring'd lids, and holds them close,*
> *And hooting at the glorious sun in heaven*
> *Cries out, 'Where is it?'"*

But all the dreamers hoped for is realized through Him, and the dream has come true.

2. Another dream which disturbed the night and filled the hearts of men, waking and sleeping, was the hope that somewhere and somehow, there might be pardon for sin. From the days when Adam went out of the Garden of Eden, and Cain cried: "My punishment is greater than I

can bear," men have cried unto God for surcease from the sorrow of their sin, for pardon of their iniquity. If there is no pardon of sin, then men are undone. There can be no real happiness so long as we are racked with the torture of our iniquity. Until there is some physician that can " minister to a *mind* diseased," it is only of secondary importance to minister to a sick body. Until there is something that can " cleanse the stuffed bosom of the perilous stuff that weighs upon it," the additions of earthly comfort are of little account.

Men have believed that there might be an atonement for sin, and so have made their children pass through the fire to Moloch, hoping by the fruit of their loins to atone for the sins of their souls. You can still find this thought where the devotee, after the fashion of Simon, the Stylite, stands for a generation on the top of a pillar, or where he walks with shoes filled with spikes, or wears a shirt of needles, or goes on hands and knees through the weary leagues of scorching sand. It has been the dream of the ages that somewhere there might be forgiveness of sin, and that dream is realized. 'Tis not a matter of theory, it is a matter of happy experience, and he who cried, " O, wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death," now cries out: " There is, therefore, now no condemnation." And into the dream has come the glorious fulfillment in words which the world will never let perish: " For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." There are myriads of testimonials all about us in altered lives. There are twice-born men and women in every community and on every street, who cry out: " This poor man cried and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his distresses."

3. There was one more dream which men and women

have dreamed, seated in the dust, with ashes thrown upon their heads. It is a dream of the future, a dream which should answer the awful challenge: "If a man die, shall he live again?" Here we made our home and our hearts were happy. But here we learned too soon that we had no continuing city.

"The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he had pressed
In their bloom;
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb."

And is that all there is of it? Is love here to find its grave and its undoing? The most eloquent man who trained with the agnostics, stood over his dead brother, whom he dearly loved, and all he could say was: "A wreck must mark the end of each and every life, and every life will at its close become a tragedy as sad and deep and dark as can be woven of the warp and woof of mystery and death!" But from the Nazarene comes the glorious declaration which answers the world's dream of immortality: "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also." In the dream of the Revelator, musing by the shore of the sobbing sea, is the holy declaration: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

So the great dreams of humanity, the dream of erring humanity, the dream of God the Father, the dream of the happy heart, the dream of the angel's fellowship of love, these are realized. The realization of these great dreams

ought to make the expectation a surety that all lesser dreams which hinge upon them will come true. The dream of God is fulfilled in the face of Jesus Christ. The pardon of the cross is a reality, and what was once a dream has transformed itself into deeds, and for two thousand years has proved itself to be a great "history-making power."

4. There is yet another dream of the brotherhood of men, which, though we see it not yet perfectly translated into human deed, is facing that way, under the Cross. The men who came to these shores were dreamers, but they were, as has been said "stern men with empires in their brains." They were the products of Christianity and they dreamed a Christian dream. They said: "We will found a kingdom here on the principles, as best we may, of the Kingdom of God." As I have said, we have not wrought out the perfection of their dream. So far as we have followed the light and path which they selected, we have faced a glorious day. By the shores of the sounding sea; in those rich and happy lands where the great Father of Waters runs to the Gulf; on the prairies drained by the great rivers and watered by the melting snows of the mountains, empire upon empire has formed itself, out of the iridescent dream of our fathers, until at last we have forty-eight States, infinitely beyond any empire which ever saw the light in the days of Athens, or Rome, or Carthage, or Babylon, or Nineveh. And the sun, riding on his course, shines nowhere on such homes of peace and affluence—the homes wherein you live.

Little by little, that city which men saw in dreams, the City of Brotherly Love, is being built up. Ever and again new spires of beauty gleam in the sun. Once and again her buildings are enlarged and her beauties multiplied, until at last the capstone shall be brought forth with rejoicing, and the dreams of the ages shall be crystallized in that

" city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." May this glorious hope which has transformed the ages, become a fact in your life and mine, and the dream which has pried open your eyes with bars of happy laughter, be true for all! May your dreams of oneness with God be a fact; and may the eternal life, already begun, be crystallized into a glorious certainty which shall never fade away!

V

THE PLANTING OF A NATION

"Thy people shall be all righteous. They shall inherit the land forever; the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified."—ISAIAH 60: 21.

MY text unites with universal history to affirm that righteousness exalteth a nation. With wealth and force of arms behind them, many a State has been carried to the graveyard of nations, while "the little one that feared God has become a thousand and the small one a strong nation." It is fitting that we who are the descendants, or bear the traditions of the men who laid the foundation of the Republic on these shores and rocked the cradle of a nascent nation should celebrate, as we do this week, our national birthday, and meditate upon the paths which have brought us hither.

It is quite the fashion in some quarters to-day to malign the men who were the founders of our Republic and who set the pace for our national life. In some quarters it has been a thing prayed for that something might be said to overthrow the previous noble estimate of the men who were the fathers of the state and Church in America. The Impuritans have taken to writing the biographies of the Puritans. They have pushed the old saints from their pedestals and put in their places the men whom the centuries have condemned. But all that is a matter of little concern, since men as well as trees are judged by their fruit, and when you consider the fruitage of the years you are ready to estimate the character of the seed and the

sowers. No one has better interpreted the spirit and genius of our forefathers than James Russell Lowell, historian, scholar, poet, ambassador—one "to the manner born." He says: "They were not plump, rosy-cheeked Englishmen who came to our shores. They were an earnest-eyed race, stiff with long wrestling with the Lord in prayer." Doubtless the old Puritan was angular, grim and unjoyous. Persecution produced him and ease in Zion wilted and eliminated him. But in his day he was as strong as a Roman bridge, and it is to him that we owe the genius of our institutions and the greatness and glory of our Republic. "He was not a pretty figurehead cut in a cherry stone, but a Colossus hewn from the rock—huge, grim and awe-inspiring, fortifying to the soul, if not warming to the heart. Doubtless he was narrow but so is the sword of righteousness and everything else that has an edge to it."

Let us ask the men who sailed up the Mystic, and those who in the cabin of the *Mayflower,* began the first state document with the pious words, "In the name of God, Amen,"—let us ask them why they came. In our time men emigrate because they are hungry and want bread, but there is a vast difference between a new country settled by empty stomachs and one settled by hungry souls and consciences determined to be free. They came here to keep company with God, and endure hardness in a strange land. They were a cultured company, fellows of Oxford and Cambridge were among them. They knew that the hope of the world was in its common people not in king or aristocracy. Wendell Phillips said in Faneuil Hall, "Lord Bacon may lay his hand on the telegraph and steamboat and say, 'These are mine. I taught you to invent.' The Puritan wherever he finds a free altar, free speech and a free family, may say 'These are mine.'" If that be true your charge of bigotry is of as little account as a flyspeck on Michelangelo's

Moses. They laid the egg of Democracy. One of our greatest historians has said, "It was the drumbeat of Naseby and Dunbar that gathered the Minute Men on Lexington Common, and in the red dint of the axe on Charles' block the clock of our era struck one."

They did not come as adventurers or to make money by conquest or trade. "Their motive," says Edward Everett, "is the spring of all that is truly great in human affairs." God picked out the hardest place on earth and said, "See what men inspired of liberty and God can do." They had one idea, it is true, but it was an idea born of the spirit and not of the flesh. "They looked upon their little commonwealth as their own private estate, as they had a perfect right to do, and would no more allow the Devil's religion of unreason to be preached there than we would permit a prize fight in our front yards." "They had ventured their souls and bodies and fortunes to the extent of a million dollars in the religious commonwealth. Do you blame them because they desired to be free from the presence of those whom they thought likely to overthrow the state? They stood for God and religion. They asked for nothing, planned for nothing, hoped for nothing, save what should come of their religion. They believed in the Bible and God's decrees. They came over to profess the one and fulfill the other."

If a state is to be founded, a society organized, a battle fought, then we want a man of iron and blood who has abandoned the flesh, who is strong in duty, who enshrines worship on the domestic hearth, truth before the tribunals, honesty in his counting house, sobriety in his workshop and puts conscience and truth into everything he does. The Puritan was the man who when he hewed timbers out of the forest for his home, hewed also the timbers for a church and a schoolhouse, in order that the home might

be worth having. When he hung the crane, he set up the family altar, and when the children came, he named them after the heroes of the Old Testament and the virtues of the New. When Boston had only thirty houses and Massachusetts no more than twenty-five civilized towns, the pastors devised the plan of Harvard College " with the primary function," they said, " of making worthy preachers and fit hearers of the truth, which is the life of the soul."

" They did not dread the skeptic's puny hands
While near the school the church spire stands,
Nor feared the blinded bigot's rule
While near the church spire stands the school."

Those old Puritan preachers said religion will either refine politics or politics will contaminate religion. Berkeley in his maxims concerning patriotism wrote, " To be a real patriot a man must consider his countrymen as God's creatures and himself as accountable for acting toward them."

It would be interesting to note the development of the idea which changed us from a company of unrelated states to the unity of a great nation. In the early days men counted themselves citizens of Massachusetts or Virginia, of New York or Carolina, and there is still a sense of state pride which will doubtless be treasured for many a year. But the time has come when the stars in our glorious flag make up one constellation and the States one nation. The South is bounded on the North by the Lakes, the North is bounded on the South by the Gulf, the East is wave-washed by the Pacific and the West finds no boundary until it meets the surges of Hatteras and the rocky coast of New England.

If we are one nation, it is well for us to ask ourselves, are we one race? Our own Prof. Osborn has said, " If I were asked what is the greatest danger which threatens the

American Republic to-day, I would certainly reply, the gradual dying out among our people of those hereditary traits, through which the principles of our religious, political and social foundations were laid down, and their invidious replacement by traits of less noble character." The problem of the melting pot is the problem which we are facing and in the facing of it, it is likely to strain our sinews even if it does not break our heart. We have thought that environment played a much larger part in life than heredity, and if we could only get people here and surround them with proper environment they would become cultured and intellectual according to our standards. There is a problem which our biologists and psychologists will have to consider. We have a common land, a common language and common institutions. What will be the effect of all that upon birth and heredity? The great hope of America is that there is a transmission of qualities through souls as well as through the flesh and if that be true it goes without saying that the harvesting which shall come from the planting of our national life must be along the line of our ideals.

Ruskin long ago observed that "the only real wealth is human character and what boots our extended railway mileage or the fact that all our coal and minerals are dug, or our trees cut down a year or two sooner, if our democracy has deteriorated. We hear much about the conservation of our natural resources, but the conservation of our ideals is infinitely more important. How can we conserve those ideals unless by our devotion to purity and truth, to law and order?" There is great hope in the splendid offerings which men of means are making for the education of the people. There is even greater hope to be found in the training of humble homes where fathers and mothers fear God and walk in righteousness. We have passed far beyond the homespun age in social opportunities and re-

quirements, but the homespun age when there was "plain living and high thinking" we must never outgrow.

In his "Deserted Village" Goldsmith wrote:

> *"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,*
> *Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;*
> *Princes and Lords may flourish, or may fade—*
> *A breath can make them, as a breath has made—*
> *But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,*
> *When once destroyed can never be supplied."*

In the last analysis the great political questions are not settled in Washington. They are settled in the stores and factories of our cities, in the homes and churches and organizations of the country where thoughtful men weigh the great questions of national life. It is they who send Senators and Representatives to Congress. It is they who must hold their representatives to the high ideals which were in their minds when they sent them. If they prove intellectually stolid or morally inert, the votes which sent them to the halls of legislature can bring them back, and they can be replaced by stronger and truer men. The great questions of finance and national prosperity are not settled in Wall Street, but in the cornfields of the Middle West, in the great wheatfields of the prairies and the cotton plantations of the South. They laugh into abundant harvest under the blessings of God's sunlight and rain and the faithful toil of humble men and women. If we say it is *our* power that has brought us wealth, we have only to realize that if God should withhold the sunlight and the shower the bony knee of famine would push open the door of affluence and desolation pervade our streets. We are workers together with God. As goes the home, the church, the school, so goes America. The common people must fear God and work righteousness or we are undone.

In the words of Paul, "We see not yet all things put

under Him, but we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honour " and we hear Him saying "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Anything can be made possible if we are undergirded by His strength. We must stand by those great principles which have made us a God-fearing people. With all our limitations and our failures let it be understood now and forever that this is a Christian land. It is too late in the day to deny the power and authority of God, and it is too late to break down the barriers which the centuries have set up to sustain the good man and to restrain the bad. If any man or nation turns away from God and those things which are of good report, it is written in the nature of things, as well as in the course of human events, that those who oppose His righteousness shall perish. Our institutions have been nourished by Christian men. Our colleges and our asylums were founded and supported by them and it is the spirit of Christ in the hearts of the people that makes this land favoured by God's peculiar smile. Religion has here its strongest supporters. There are more than forty-seven millions of actual communicant members of the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish Communions, and at least as many more that are affiliated with the Churches. This will indicate sufficiently the fact that we have every right to say that ours is a Christian nation. I have great hope for the future. This nation was founded by Christian men; the Puritan, the Dutch, the Quaker, with their compatriots of many faiths, North and South, laid the foundation of our great Republic.

"The Pilgrim spirit has not fled;
It walks in noon's broad light;
And it watches the bed of the glorious dead,
With the holy stars by night.
It watches the bed of the brave who bled,
And shall guard our rock-bound shore,
Till the waves of the bay, where the Mayflower lay,
Shall foam and freeze no more."

There are grave questions which face our land in the new day. She has come to her kingdom, to her prime and her power for a great day and nations are looking unto her. We must gird our loins if we are to play any great part in the life of the world. A Christian citizenship must be here developed, Christian principles must be taught in our schools and colleges, and exemplified in the lives of those who teach. With all our intellectual training we must realize that the training of our youth in character is after all the greatest task. If this shall be done, the men who will dominate the new age will be men of light and leading who will bless the world and make our nation the synonym of all that is true and noble in national life. May we be able to say of her with fond hope and expectation, as Whittier sings of our Ship of State:

"Sail on, sail on, deep freighted
With blessings and with hopes;
The saints of old with shadowy hands
Are pulling at your ropes.

"Behind ye holy martyrs
Uplift the palm and crown;
Before ye unborn ages send
Their benedictions down.

"Sail on! the morning cometh,
The port ye yet shall win;
And all the bells of God shall ring
The good ship bravely in."

VI

CAN GOD FORGIVE SIN?

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."—JOHN 1: 29.

OCCASIONALLY you will find some treasurer of learning's crumbs, or, as Shakespeare puts it, "a snapper up of unconsidered trifles," who will say to you, "I can spell some word of learned length and thundering sound with five letters." I can do more than that to-day: I can spell consternation, condemnation and retribution with three letters. The single word *S I N* spells all that and infinitely more. There is another word of three letters which is terrible—that is war. But with all its ruin it cannot touch the awful catastrophe of sin. War fills graves, sin peoples perdition. Heaven would be full and hell would be empty but for the fearful things for which that word stands. We dress sin in gold and silk, but the cloven foot is underneath. We house it in palaces but at last it throws them down and every dweller there is overwhelmed in the ruin. It conquered Samson, the strong; Saul, the fair; and Solomon, the wise, as well as Antony and Cleopatra. It has built pyramids of broken hearts that would overtop the mountains and has drowned the world's hopes in a universal flood of bitter tears.

All this and infinitely more is in the one word—sin. It was in view of this that shadows wrapped the universe as Poe puts it:

"And the angels all pallid and wan
Uprising, unveiling affirm
That the play is the tragedy man
And the hero the conquering worm."

Set beside the seventh chapter of Romans all the tragedies of Edipus and Macbeth and Hamlet and Othello are only stage play with so much sound and fury, but signifying next to nothing, in comparison with the dread story of human life. In the first Book of the Bible we see its unfolding. Nobody knows how sin came into the world. The origin of sin has been a favourite theme of philosophers and theologians, but the minds of the common people have been so busy with the thing itself that they have had little interest in its pedigree. Theologians will tell you that sin entered the world through the acceptance of evil by the free will of man. There has always been a flaming sword at the gates of Guilt. Sin makes all men homeless wanderers. Every sinner is a fugitive and a vagabond and his own conscience is his Nemesis. Sin is missing the mark, separation from God.

Before Cain had translated his hatred of his brother into murder, God said to him, " If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door," as Moffatt has it, " eager to be at you." What a picture that is! A wrong deed—sin—like a crouching tiger ready to spring. If thou doest not well, thou createst a horrible something which nestles at thy door and thou wilt never know when it will spring upon thee.

We say, " whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," but we do not appreciate that it is the working out of a definite law. The law of consequences is as immutable as the law of gravitation. Lady Macbeth cried, " If 'twere done when 'tis done, 'twere well that it be done quickly," but seeing that 'tis not *done* when 'tis done, it would be infinitely better 'twere not done at all. The deed of a moment,—forgotten possibly when it is done,—lies crouching at the door. God only knows when it will spring at one's throat in the darkness. Whatever may be said of the laws

of memory, the psychologists are telling us there is no such thing as forgetting. A mist may hang over the horizon but in an unexpected moment it lifts. You write your deeds in sympathetic ink and the page seems blank, but when the fire tests it, every word stands out with a fearful distinctness. Ah, friends, it is only a man of little wit and no memory who dares to lift his head and say, "All I ask is justice." Shakespeare has it right when he declares:

"Though justice be thy plea, consider this—
That in the course of justice
None of us should see salvation."

The noblest and the best in the world might still make the words of John Quincy Adams their own

"My last great want, absorbing all
When laid beneath the sod
And summoned to my last account—
The mercy of my God."

My father used to tell of a poor fellow on trial who could hardly stand on account of his fear. His lawyer said to him, " Don't be so disturbed. I will see that you have justice done you," and his client stammered, " That is what I am afraid of." Shakespeare says, " Nothing emboldens sin so much as mercy." If that is true, to what depths have we fallen! We need to understand that the thing which breaks hearts and fills graves and blinds humanity is the fearful thing which we call sin. No man can flee from himself, and to the sinner the bitter cry of Satan is true, " Myself am hell."

Is there such a thing as wiping out this dread account? Is there anywhere forgiveness of sin for the sinner? A little reflection will show us how bitter and uncompromising sin is. Ask nature if she forgives, and she will tell you that that word is not written down in her code of laws.

Cause and effect, transgression and punishment are written everywhere in the jungle, it is red in tooth and claw with rapine, and it is so in the physical constitution of men. You transgressed the laws of health in your youth and nature never forgave you. This day you are reaping what you sowed of excess or denial. In the long ago you cheated your mind or your body, and every year nature is making fearful reprisals. There is little of forgiveness in nature.

And is society more yielding and lenient? Are offenses against its laws and customs overlooked and condoned? Ask the woman who has loved not wisely but too well. Ask the poor fellow who comes out of the penitentiary longing to be an honest citizen and to make an honest living and finds no one who will give him a chance. Ask anybody who has ever sinned against the conventions of society, have they found forgiveness anywhere, even though they sought it with bitterness and tears. How about your own experience? If you have wronged others, have they been quick to forgive you? If you have been wronged by others, if you have lost your property, or your peace of mind, or the well-being of your family by the prodigality or folly or wickedness of other people, have you found it easy to say to them, "Let bygones be bygones, go in peace."

Then, when it comes to your own soul, when you look your own life over, when you see how others have suffered on account of your lapses and failures and sins, have you not been forced to say more than once, "I hope God has forgiven me, but I can never forgive myself. What a fool I was! I knew better but I thought I could escape where others were found out. O wretched man that I am! I can never forgive myself for the wrong I have done to my own soul and to those who love me." And this thought introduces the bitterest thing in all a sinful life. No man

liveth or sinneth unto himself. You led some friend into the path of dalliance. You made him acquainted with evil thoughts and purposes, you enticed him and he fell. Can you ever draw a happy breath when you remember the condemnation which overwhelmed him through you? It is unspeakably bitter to have accidentally caused the pain or death of another. I know a man who unwittingly shot and killed his friend in a hunting expedition, and his neighbours say he has never been known to smile since. I know a man who accidentally put out the eye of a playmate whom he loved and the shadow of it has never lifted from his soul.

But when it comes to the consequences of our sin, what can a man say in the face of all that and what can he do? The man who sins against nature has to die. There is little of forgiveness. We know that society stands with a lifted sword over those who transgress its laws. You remember Kipling's "Truce of the Bear," and how he left his victim "blind to the darkening years and the little mercy of men." We have seen how hard it is for men to forgive one another and the impossibility that a man should forgive himself. If you are saying that sin is a negligible quantity in our time, it only shows that you do not know the hearts of men and are trying to deceive your own. Sorrow and shame and sin have not gone out of fashion. They are as much in evidence to-day as they ever were. They are ingrained in the lives of men. "The wages of sin is death" is as true to-day as it was two thousand years ago.

But now I am asking with a yearning too deep for words, is there any forgiveness for sin anywhere? What is this message of my text—"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world?" Much as man has suffered on account of sin, it seems God has suffered more.

To save man from the effects of his sin and the love of it God sent His only begotten Son into the world that He might save it by dying for it. If any man thinks that sin is a little thing, let him look at Calvary and see the high cost which was paid for our deliverance. Whatever theories of the atonement you may hold, I do not care. There are a dozen of them about which men differ and argue one another down, but there is one conviction which has settled down on the souls of thoughtful men and that is there is no atonement, no satisfaction, no comfort, no hope except that which is found in the sacrifice of the Son of God in our behalf.

Can God forgive sin? Robert Ingersoll said He could not, and I wonder myself when I see with what a high hand men have sinned against God that He can make good His promise. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Our hearts may well be lifted up with joy unspeakable when we read the glorious assertion of the Apostle. " If we say we have no sins, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God Himself cannot blot out the human consequences of our evil acts. That man whose feet we turned into evil ways went to his grave and no repentance of ours can bring him back. We sow the seeds of a disordered mind or body and no power of God will restore our mind or our body to its pristine power. But thank God, if we repent and confess our sins, He takes out of our hearts all the bitterness and sting and in His forgiveness unspeakable joy breaks in upon the soul. Our failures and our sins challenge us to greater devotion. He brings to us a sense of blessed fellowship with Him. He gives us a new heart. The things which we loved we now hate and those which we hated we

now love. Evil has no more charm for us for we see it as it is—the enemy of all righteousness, the destroyer of the souls of men.

If we go on as we are, unrepentant and evil, we face a ruin unspeakable and eternal. Jesus said that it were better to lose an eye or a hand or a foot than to hazard a soul. He said that a white robe was better than a purple one and that we had better beg for bread in this world than to cry for water in the next! He said the penalty of sin would not exhaust itself in this life—what we are here we are going to be in the eternities. So there is only one thing to do and we must do it now. We must find through repentance the mercy and forgiveness of God. The man who says he is not a sinner has blinded his own eyes. It is always the noblest man who bewails his own imperfections. It is the greatest scholar who owns the depths of his ignorance. They who in smug complacency say, "I have not sinned" thereby commit the greatest of sins. They have denied their Lord, made His sacrifice an unholy thing and put Him to open shame. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

My text declares the only hope for the sinning world. Prophecy pointed forward to Him and promised that He should save His people from their sins. Experience exalts the actual Christ and cries "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." From the depth of degradation, from the ranks of the broken-hearted and the doomed who are constantly saying, "O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death," there comes the triumphant answer of a great experience:

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear.
He owns me for His child
I can no longer fear."

No man can love sin and see God in peace, for He will not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. Browning puts into the lips of his Rabbi words which should thrill us through and through:

"Would a man 'scape the rod?
Rabbi Ben Karshook saith,
'See that he turns to God
The day before his death!'

" 'Aye, could a man inquire
When it shall come!' I say.
The Rabbi's eye shoots fire—
'Then let him turn to-day.' "

" Let the sinner forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord who will have mercy and unto our God who will abundantly pardon."

If one has played fast and loose with the mercy of God, what could be sweeter than to hear Him say:

"Ye who have sold for naught
Your heritage above
Shall have it back unbought,
The gift of Jesus' love."

If you want to find the path to peace there is a stanza in " The Ballad of Reading Gaol " that will show the way:

"Ah! Happy they whose hearts can break
And peace of pardon win.
How else may man make straight his path
And cleanse his soul from sin!
How else but through a broken heart
May Lord Christ enter in?"

VII

TAKING SHIP: YOUR VACATION TRIP

"And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship."—ACTS 21: 6.

"Come away to some lonely spot, and get a little rest. So they went away privately in the boat to a lonely spot."—MARK 6: 31–2. (Moffatt's Translation.)

MY message to-day is really a vacation message and as such it naturally divides itself into two parts—a message to those who are taking a trip abroad and a message to those who are staying at home. I should be glad if I had a Sunday for each of these two classes but you will bear with me if I limit myself to a single message. Some of our trustees left this last week for Europe. For them my first text is very fitting. For those whose vacation must lie on this side of the water, the message of Jesus to His disciples as recorded in my second text, seems especially appropriate.

My first text, you will recall, refers to a very impressive scene on the seashore at Tyre, where Paul is bidding good-bye to those who are very dear to him, and entering upon adventures where matters of life and death are at issue.

You noticed the reference made by our former President, Mr. Coolidge, in one of his recent newspaper articles to the value of foreign travel, both for the traveller himself and for the lands which he visits. Every traveller should be a messenger of peace; brought into intimate relations with men of different history, traditions and creeds, there should be mutual understanding, so that each could appreciate the other's position and all realize their common brotherhood

and their common aspirations. Travel in foreign countries may be to many quite as enlightening and inspiring as a college course. You are in touch with life. It does us good to realize that God's sentences are long sentences, that it may be a thousand years between the subject and the predicate, but faith and experience unite to say that sometime and some way God will finish each sentence.

"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

It is a great thing to study history where it happened; to meditate at Bethlehem and Galilee and Calvary; to study the story of their lives on the spot where Sidney and Russell went to the block; to realize afresh the faith of those men who went hence with a "Tyburn tippet" around their necks, and went as happily as a bridegroom would go to meet his bride; to stand on the field of Waterloo and recall how the great man there made way for the great age; to find in many lands the thrilling story of the march of liberty, from Salamis to Runnymede and from Runnymede to the Argonne. He was a wise man who wrote, "Patriotism grows warm upon the plains of Marathon and piety is enkindled amid the ruins of Iona."

But there is a more personal side to your ocean trip to which I would like to call your attention. What an allegory of life a foreign voyage is! How it portrays that life toward which all men hasten and for which the life which now is should be a preparation. As you go on a foreign voyage, you ask yourself the questions—Have I adjusted my affairs so that if I never come back all would be well? Have I made adequate preparation for the needs of that new life into which I shall be entering? I may be a millionaire here, but if I had made no preparation for those lands to

which I go I might starve on the wharves of Liverpool. The only coin of the realm that passes current in the Land to which I go is the coin of good deeds. I have been reading of the lands I am to visit. I want to know the history and the customs of the people. The more I know of their language the better. I must study the guide books. Would it be too much to question ourselves as to whether we had mastered the one Book which is the Guide Book for that land where there is no more sea?

If I am visiting strange lands, I carry letters of introduction to men of position and renown. In that Land toward which I go there is one Name which is above every name. Is He my Friend? Before you sailed, you were careful to have your passport, and before you got it you had to take solemn oath that you were a loyal citizen of this country and that you gave full allegiance to her laws. After that, the Secretary of State gave you a document with the authority of the United States behind it, giving you safe passage in other lands and guaranteeing you aid and protection. What about your citizenship in that country which is to be your permanent home? These and a hundred other thrilling questions make the allegory to which I call your attention a matter of deepest concern and you will be surprised at the parallels which will appear when the " anchor-lifting " comes and you sail out on that sea where there are no bones of shipwrecked mariners and no wrecks of stately ships, but into whose far harbour all may come full cargoed—the testimony yours of that sweet translation of Wyclif's, " I was harbourless and Ye harboured me! "

May I bring my word of present cheer and challenge to you who will not take a foreign trip? One of my friends has just taken his eighty-seventh trip to Europe, and a large number of your friends and mine are speeding across

the sea this minute that they may find rest or study art or sit with other thousands at the Passion Play at Oberammergau. But you are not going; you have not been, perhaps you will never go. You cannot even go to the Canadian Rockies or the White Mountains, or to the seashore, at Newport or Atlantic City or Biloxi on the Gulf or the matchless seaports of the Pacific Coast.

But you will need in some way to knit up the ravelled sleeve of care. The prevailing malady in our time we are told is neurasthenia and our patron saint is not St. George, or St. Andrew or St. Patrick but St. Vitus. One is constantly under the lash of the cry for efficiency. The last ounce of strength must be put forth, jaded wits must be keyed up. It is "move on," "step lively," "watch your step." One is environed in an atmosphere which is electric. In the language of the street, the time comes when it gets on one's nerve. Much of the impatience and bitterness and even hate and crime of life could be cured if men would take time to go apart and rest. Jesus saw it in His time under far different conditions than ours, and He sought that rest for Himself and for those whom He loved. How much we need to get acquainted with ourselves! We are lashed from without, we need to be stimulated from within. We study other people. The motto of the greatest of ancient philosophers was "Know thyself." We are confused by jangling voices; we need to listen to the still, small voice within us. Life is like the Great White Way. There are times when we ought to put out each garish light and see only God's guiding and beckoning stars. The past is on our trail, the hounds of jealousy and hate, to say nothing of the ghosts of unholy thoughts and purposes. We must have the courage to forget. There may be moments even when we need to forget our debts as our debtors have forgotten theirs.

Gazing so much upon our immediate surroundings, we lose our perspective. Nothing seems of value but the things that now are, and the little annoyances take on an importance far beyond their real value.

I suppose different people find rest and recuperation under different circumstances. This week I spoke to a very nervous couple who were going on a vacation. When I suggested the balm of country quiet, they said: "We would die there. Give us Atlantic City, Coney Island, anywhere where something is going on. We want to be saved from our thoughts." I can imagine conditions where loss of friends or cherished hopes may make one anxious to forget, but as for me, there is balm and healing in the song of the birds and the ripple of the water and the gentle summer breeze and the rolling tide as it breaks upon the shingly beach. There is an old Scotch song entitled "Ken Ye the Lan'?" that finds an answer in my soul—

"Ken ye the lan' o' the laigh gray skies,
Whaur the green pine nods, an' the wild bird cries;
Whaur the heather blooms an' the gowan grows,
And sweet is the scent o' the briar rose?
Ken ye the lan'?
I am fain, I am fain,
Tae see the blue hills o' my ain lan' again.

"Ken ye the fowk i' the mirk, alane,
Whase ears are gleg for the stap o' their ain?
Their words may be cauld, but their hearts are aflame;
'Ye've been lang awa'; ye are welcome hame.'
Ken ye the fowk?
I am fain, I am fain,
Tae see the dear licht o' their faces again!"

But wherever you go, whether it is in your own backyard or among the mountains or to some lonely spot, remember that a vacation period is to be a period of real *re-*

creation. Let it be a *restful* instead of a *rushful* vacation; loaf and invite your soul!

Now, realizing that I am speaking alike to vacationists and those who care for them, to those who live in the city and go to the country, and those who live in the country and go sometimes to the city, let me venture to say we must not forget our influence upon those we meet, and our place in the community where we move. I know some men who have changed the face of the entire life of the village or town where they spent the summer. Some of them were leading men of our churches. Their names were on the great missionary boards and philanthropic societies. They are interested in schools and hospitals and asylums. They might have said, " What good can I get in this little town? Why should I go to church and hear some minister of limited experience and ability? " What such men are more likely to say is, " It is more than an even chance that I shall hear quite as good a sermon in the country as in the city." One of the greatest of theological presidents used to say to his students, " If you are going to preach in the city, wear your best clothes; if you are going to preach in the country, take your best sermon." This preacher is a man of God. He has looked through the windows of his soul into the face of the Almighty, and brought back a message, fitted for us all.

As the man who has wrought well and given himself without stint is the only man who needs, or is worthy of, a vacation, so also the man who puts his vacation to the highest service for his own development and the blessing of men is the only one who properly appreciates his opportunity. If a man does not come back from his communion with men and nature more ambitious for spiritual service for God and man, he has not used his vacation to the same purpose that the Master used His.

But what shall I say to those who will have no vacation, —who are shut in, in home, and hospital and asylum, prisoners in what Stevenson calls "the Pleasant Land of Counterpane." The only change they will look forward to is a change of sheets and coverlets and, I hope, a new handful of roses or pansies or lilies or forget-me-nots. Hundreds of such I know and there are tens of thousands who are now listening, who have learned in suffering what they teach us in life and song. I wish I could call the names of those I know and tell you the thrilling story of their victory and faith: A football captain paralyzed on the field, not able to move an inch for five years; a servant of God, a man shaken to pieces by every turn of his driving wheel, fighting a losing battle with t. b.; a great scholar, such as Coolidge pictures Darwin, only able to work twenty minutes a day and falling back exhausted; a veteran, shell-shocked and gassed and helpless; a pair of eyes whose hinges are rusted and whose lids will never lift until the angel of death shall kiss them into eternal light—all these are listening to me this moment, and thousands like them. When the end comes they will be singing with Stevenson:

"Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

"This be the verse you grave for me,
'Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.'"

It is the *conquered,* after all, who are the greatest victors.

"The happiest heart that ever beat
Was in some quiet breast
That found the common daylight sweet
And left to Heaven the rest."

Some of us are likely fussing and making ourselves and others unhappy because we cannot go to Europe, but must stay at home; because we have only one month instead of two, or one week instead of four, for a vacation, and can only spend hundreds of dollars where we would like to spend thousands. Let us cool our fretful pulses as we think of these others. Let these vacation days renew our strength, our patience, our sympathy and love, so that wherever our path may lie we may " run and not be weary, we may walk and not faint."

VIII

THE BLIND MAN'S CREED

"One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."
—JOHN 9: 25.

IN the incident from which my text is taken there is a most interesting contention concerning the claims of Christ. The parties to the debate are two. On one side are the professors of theology—learned and adroit men. They have all the prophecies concerning the Messiah at their tongues' end. On the other side is a humble man with the dull mind of the ordinary man of toil and untrained intellect. He cannot understand their arguments or quite catch the meaning of the words they use. The masters of theology have shown the claims of Jesus as Messiah to be unfounded and then they proceed to denounce the man and to vilify his character. The other defends the man and his character with all his might, but neither does the other any good for they look at the question from different standpoints, or as Charles Lamb puts it, they are arguing from opposite premises. The Pharisee measures the claims of this Galilean Teacher by the principles which have been generally accepted by his cult for centuries. So tried, the claimant does not meet the condition. Another heinous offence is that he does not agree with these teachers as shown by his practices on the Sabbath and about other serious matters.

Intellectual habits were not much different then from what they are now. If a man does not believe as we do, one of two things must be true,—either he has not the

gray matter to weigh the evidence or he is a man of some selfish or corrupt purpose, and so will not see the truth. We have a very biting sentence that we use in such cases. We are quite inclined to say that the man who disagrees with us is " either a fool or a knave." So in this case to disagree with these learned teachers becomes a mark of depravity as well as intellectual density.

But now it is the blind man's turn to answer. What can he say? Nothing from their standpoint, but from his own point of view, he is irresistible. He was born in darkness and in darkness he has lived. He has felt the sun but never saw it. He has heard the birds sing but has never marvelled at their glorious plumage. He has smelled the fragrance of the flowers but has never seen them in their robes of green and purple and gold. He has never beheld them lifting up their white chalices for heaven's dew. He never saw a human smile. He never watched the love light in a human face, nor looked into the depths of a mother's quenchless love that was mirrored there. He has walked all his life in the darkness of an inner prison, but this Man opened the door; He led him into the sunlight. It was through His touch that he came to see the vision of love in the human face and to marvel at nature's grace and beauty. In the face of that experience, what did he care about the speculations of the teachers? He cannot reply in kind to the base insinuations of the critics, but he is at them after another fashion: " Whether He be a sinner or not I cannot tell, but this I know, that whereas I was once blind, I now see." That is his creed, a creed with only one article. His whole mind and interest and testimony is settled on one fact—I know one thing. I can see. That is his confession of faith. That is his Catechism. I think you might call it the Shorter Catechism, but it is really the best creed that a man can have in matters of

faith. If you had aroused him in the middle of the night and asked him what was the greatest thing in the world, he would have said it is this—that whereas I was once blind I now see.

To be sure this poor fellow was persecuted for his witness to the truth, but he was not the last one to suffer for his testimony. Galileo had to do that sixteen hundred years later and long before that time Socrates and Anaxagoras. In this incident, we see the practical application of the claims of Jesus set against the speculative doubt of those claims. This dispute between the blind man and the Pharisees is a symbol of what often happens in the world even in our time. It would be easy to find men now who have doubts concerning Christianity which were born of intellectual inquiry and which they say it is impossible for them to ignore. But there is another class of persons who have a confidence in Christianity born of a new *experience* which it is impossible for anybody to *overthrow*.

Now these two men are arguing from opposite premises, each speaks to the other in an unknown tongue. One does not believe the Bible miracles and cannot tolerate the thought that Christianity is supernatural. The other thinks only of the miracle that has been wrought in him and that makes all other miracles possible to his thought. One is not sure as to the verity of the historic Christ. The other affirms that he met Him, as St. Paul says he did, and for evidence will point to his open eyes. One has doubt about the Gospel records; the other finds nourishment for his soul in them and says they throb with spirit and life. One waits for the last utterance of some theologian to settle his mind and the other strengthens his faith by the daily responses which are vouchsafed to the Christian believer. One speaks from the standpoint of a darkened intellect, the other answers from a sunlit soul.

Surrounded by theological doubts, one says sadly, as for this man Jesus, I know not from whence he is, but the other replies, "Why herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence He came and yet He hath opened my eyes."

Neither of these men can quite understand the attitude of the other. In one case, their message is addressed to the intellect and in the other to the soul. One is the historical argument, the other is the spiritual argument. One presents the historical evidences and finds them sufficient to convince his mind, and they have convinced great minds, and so he is a believer in the facts of Christian history. Then there are the great spiritual laws of the Gospel with its relation to the soul and its sublime offering of pardon and peace. The one who has felt these is a believer in the essence and vital truth of the Gospel.

The great fundamental fact of all this matter lies in the phrase we so often hear "experiencing religion." Christianity is not a thing to be dogmatized about or even argued about; it is a life and therefore a thing to be experienced. What we have seen and felt with confidence we tell. We hear less than we used to about experiencing religion. Is it because the thing it stands for is going out of fashion? There may have been some unwisdom and sometimes even cant in the way the words have been used, but we cannot afford to miss the fact which the words symbolize, Jesus works in me and I feel it. I am wrought upon by divine power, so I experience religion. Experience does not come after the statement of the creed but before it. As rocks preceded geology and stars preceded astronomy, experience is the soil out of which all substantial creeds must come. Historical evidence is legitimate to settle historical questions, but spiritual evidence is necessary to settle spiritual questions. Why should you

use a yardstick to measure the fragrance of a rose, or how should you estimate the power of a sunbeam by its weight on the scales? So many are seeking the spiritual from the standpoint of the purely historical. It will avail them as little as it availed Paul. The higher law is the spiritual law. Historical evidence is not to be despised; it may be a good support to the spiritual but he who uses it to take the place of the spiritual is greatly mistaken. The historical is secondary evidence. We hear a good deal in our time about science and the scientific method. Every scholar ought to realize that the scientific method is the method of demonstration, the method of fact, and in that Christian experience proves itself to be thoroughly scientific.

Paul was not led to change his position by the re-study of the teachings of the rabbis concerning Christ, the Messiah. His spiritual nature was first aroused and then he was led to change his views historically. In his own argument he always places first his own experience. Whether he speaks to the Jews or Romans, to Felix or Agrippa, he gives this experience. "If a man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine." So the fairest way to historical assurance lies along the path of spiritual experience. I quite realize the value of historical evidence. It is a great buttress to our faith, and almost every day brings us some new affirmation of the truth of the Bible struck out by pick and axe and shovel of the archeologist. But I call your attention to the fact which is to me of great force. In the nature of things, the argument from the person of Christ in its historical influence grows less the further we are removed from it. The miracles of nineteen hundred years ago must have been most forceful in the age of the people who saw them. The impressiveness of them must of necessity diminish with the passing years. If this be true and the historical evidences so-called, are of greatest

value, the first century was most fortunate and the twentieth century is greatly to be commiserated, while those who come after us will be the possessors of rapidly attenuated evidence. But so far from the evidence of Christianity becoming less powerful, history shows that the evidences have multiplied in number and power with the march of the centuries. They were never so strong as they are to-day. This is because each man has had his own evidence without going back a thousand years. The miracles of this year are as great as the miracles of any other and they are within reach of our personal investigation. In His own breast has been indisputable evidence of the validity of Christ's power and the nobility of His character, and He has become an evidence to others that could not be overthrown or argued against.

So we do not have to sit at the door of some theological professor to find out what is the latest revelation of theology concerning *God* in *Christ*. We do not have to ask the logicians for a statement of faith which cannot be controverted. Each humblest heart that has had the miracle of the new birth is a witness who cannot be argued down. May I remind you then that the criticisms which you see in magazines and papers, coming, many of them from the newly rich intellectually or from those who, as the greatest American philosopher has said, have dwelt too long in the cave of dogmatic assurance, do not touch the heart of the Christian religion. They only play about the history of it. They do not assail the facts, they only assail the record of the facts. Thousands of the noblest Christians of all ages never investigated the facts of the Bible from a historical standpoint; they had the testimony of a Christian life in their own heart and they fulfilled the Master's words—"He that believeth hath the witness in himself." So then the uttermost test of every religion

must be in its effects. What does it do for and in those who possess it? I am speaking now to thousands, perhaps millions of people, whose testimony would be accepted at its face value among those who know them, who affirm that this Christian religion has enabled them to overcome evil habits, base passion, and it has been the means of opening vistas of truth and beauty never seen before, that it has taken the sharp edge from pain and the bitterness out of sorrow and the sting out of death. No thoughtful man would think it possible that a religion that does such good could of itself be bad or that it is founded either on a falsehood or a delusion. Do you affirm the historical evidence incomplete, the record unsatisfactory, the authenticity and credibility of the Bible account marred, the life and power of Christ in historic doubt? The whole world will turn on you and say, Why wherein is a marvelous thing. Ye know not whence He is and yet He has opened our eyes.

If it were necessary, I should like to call your attention to the institutions which have flourished under the care of this great experience. You say the Church is narrow, that it stifles thought. That only shows that you do not know the history of human thought, that you have not pondered the path which eager minds have made through the marching centuries. The blood of martyrs has been the seed from which the world's renaissance has come.

> *"These mounts of anguish number*
> *How each generation learned*
> *One new word of that grand Credo*
> *Which in prophets' hearts hath burned*
> *Since the first man stood God-conquered*
> *With his face to heaven upturned."*

Who founded Harvard and Yale and Princeton and the

great universities which set the pace for education in America? Who set up the hospital and the asylum? Who is the inspiration of all the eleemosynary institutions? What has sent men with missions of love and tenderness to every island of the sea? If you ask for further evidence of this transforming power you can find it in the men whom this personal experience of faith has given to the world. Look at any age in history from the time of the Galilean until now and the forces which have most blessed the world in human life have been forces of men regenerated in Christ. I grant you there have been times when the Church has inverted its torch and almost put out its light in the ashes of its own undoing, but in any age of the world's history the Church has shown itself to be the whitest thing alive, and its rejuvenation came not from without but from within. There were always a few names in Sardis that had not defiled their garments. There was always a saving remnant. One of our greatest writers has said, "It more than matches the products of any other system. For your Plato it gives a Paul; for your Pythagoras a Peter. It surpasses the victories of Roman consuls by those of Galilean fishermen. For an Alexander it gives a Luther and a Savonarola, and a Wesley. For the conquests of Cæsar, it substitutes the holier triumphs of Howard and Clarkson and Wilberforce and Livingstone. For the knights in Rome who pillaged and killed, the peasants who fed the hungry and healed the wounded; for men moved by the lust of conquest, men moved by the love of God."

All these have had their inspiration from Him who passed across a narrow corner of an obscure and subject land, and left His footprints so deep that the ages have not obliterated them. Can you tell me how all this happened to be true? Will you answer the blind man's homely argument? "Why herein is a marvelous thing.

Ye know not whence He is, and yet He hath opened our eyes." If, therefore, you have doubts in regard to Christ's power and character, I will tell you how to settle them. You want something other than cold historical data. That settled nothing. You will need spiritual experience, as I have said, to settle spiritual truths. You will never have faith in Christ until you open your heart to Him who opens the blind man's eyes, unstops deaf ears, makes lepers clean. Every prayer to God, every spiritual aspiration of the soul, every outward act in harmony with that spirit will strengthen your conviction of its reality. You will remember how Lady Somerset says that in the great throes of doubt which brought agony to her soul, as she walked one day across her garden, it seemed as if a voice spoke to her out of the trees, which seemed to her like the voice of God—"Act as if I was and you will know I am!" From that moment she threw herself into her great work and in her toil for righteousness came the revelation of the new life to her soul. Some of you are saying, "I do not understand it." Of course not, it is spiritually discerned. You will need no other argument when you are able to offer this proof of Christ's divinity, "He hath opened mine eyes."

IX

IS THE YOUNG MAN SAFE?

"Is the young man Absalom safe?"—II SAMUEL 18: 32.

THE question of my text is a thrilling one—Is the young man safe? Before we can answer that question we want to know what has been his training, in what road he is traveling and what are his ideals and ambitions? You remember Oliver Wendell Holmes said that the training of a child should begin a hundred years before he was born. About the most important question to ask about a young man is what kind of father and mother did he have? From what sort of home did he come? That is not, of necessity, an inquiry as to the wealth and position of his parents or the size of the house in which they live. It is sad to say that though this particular young man came from a palace and was the son of a king and a poet, he was handicapped in the race of life by the home from which he came. When David was in the purity of his youth and kept his father's flocks, he could sing, "The Lord is my shepherd!" and we are inclined to think of him as "a man after God's own heart," wearing a royal crown and diverting himself from the cares of state by writing hymns for the ages; or with rapt and uplifted face playing the harp as an accompaniment to his devotion. But alas this was not always David's occupation! Like many a man in our time, he forgot God and in the hour of his temptation fell so terribly that the calamity of it weighted him down to his death. It is true of king or president, or prophet or priest, "whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Absalom's mother was the daughter of a heathen king, and this may have given Absalom *prestige* among his brethren. He had his father's beauty of face and form. We often say of young men, but especially of young women, their face is their fortune, but it has often turned out to be their misfortune.

It is from such a home and so circumstanced, that Absalom steps forth to the gaze of men. Ambition asserts itself. There are two others who stand between him and the throne. These must be gotten rid of. We may pass over other crimes of Absalom and give ourselves to the one which most concerns us, and here the real message of the day begins. David had been too busy "kinging it" to fulfill conscientiously his obligations as father. There was no greater business for David than to inculcate the lessons of purity and virtue which he had learned as a shepherd's boy and so to have builded his life into the life of his children. Long ago Socrates said, "Strange that we spend so much time in gaining a fortune and so little time on those to whom we are to leave it."

David was not willing, apparently, to pay the price of crossing the child in order that he might make a man of him. Self-denial is at the bottom of all virtue. Jesus said, "If any man would be my disciple, let him deny himself." It is self-denial which makes a scholar, or a saint, or a man,—which makes an artist, or a merchant, or a physician. Unless a man will deny himself and take up his cross, he can never truly succeed. There never was a time when that doctrine needed to be preached more than the present time, and the lesson of self-denial no one can teach a child so well as his own father and mother. But Absalom with his good looks and his pride and selfishness had never learned self-denial. He had tremendous obstacles to face. He had never learned to be master of

himself, so how could he be master of his fate? When David, his father, went forth, he went with few if any attendants, but when Absalom went on the street, fifty outriders proclaimed his coming. When a man is consumed with ambition he is not likely to let anything stand in the way of its accomplishment, and Shakespeare's words become true—

> *"I have no spur*
> *To prick the sides of my intent, but only*
> *Vaulting ambition which overleaps itself*
> *And falls on the other."*

So Absalom reaches a point where his kindly old father is to be sacrificed that he may become king himself. At last his scheme is perfected. He has made men his friends for his own purposes and the blow falls. Is there a sadder sight in history than the flight of David down over the brook Kedron and on into the Jordan Valley, fleeing from his son? A few faithful men, loyal to the old king, rallied to his support. Joab leads the king's troops, and, fleeing before his victorious forces, the army of Absalom is scattered and the usurper is caught by the head in an oak tree, and Joab thrusts him through with his javelin. Afar off the king sits anxious, not so much for his own army or his own cause as for the fate of his wayward son. His parting exhortation to his warriors had been, " Deal gently with the young man, even with Absalom! "

And now the fleet messenger is coming to bring news of the battle to the king, as he sits waiting and watching by the gate of the city. The thought which is in his heart springs to the lips of the old king and father, as he says, " Is the young man Absalom safe? " With Oriental evasion, the messenger answers, " May all that rise up against thee, be as that young man is." At last the king knows

the truth—his son, the rebel, is not safe, his life has gone out in defeat and shame and a great heap of stones is cast upon his body. You will see to-day, in the valley of Jehoshaphat a monument which is called "Absalom's tomb." On the front of it are the marks of stones which have been cast against it for centuries. Every Jew who passes by stops to throw a stone at it in utter detestation and condemnation of Absalom's ingratitude. Across the ages, you can hear the moaning of the king, "O Absalom, my son, my son! Would God I had died for thee!"

Absalom had never followed the principles of safety. How could he *be safe?* This is a story out of the long-ago, but Longfellow sings with truth—

"There is no far nor near,
There is no there nor here,
There is neither soon nor late
In that chamber o'er the gate,
Nor any long ago
To that cry of human woe,
O Absalom, my son!

"Somewhere at every hour
The watchman on the tower
Looks forth and sees the fleet
Approach of hurrying feet
Of messengers that bear
The tidings of despair.
O Absalom, my son!"

"Is the young man safe?" It requires no prophet to tell a young man's future. Tell me the direction in which he is sailing and I will tell you where he will land. But someone will say to me, "good men's children are not always good, and bad men's children are not always bad," and that is true. Much depends upon the young man himself. Heredity and environment are mighty, but they are not *almighty*. It is for our encouragement that some have

broken away from the tragedies that surrounded their youth and have come to make themselves a vital power for good in the community; and on the other hand we need to remember that even with a good home and good parents there must be a devoted purpose on the part of the young man himself or his life will fail.

The story of Absalom is not the only story of young manhood which brings its lesson to us out of the old Book. There are two records—one in the Old Testament and one in the New—that we may well consider. Here goes a young man down to Egypt, sold by his brothers for a slave. The voluptuous wife of his master tries in vain upon him her wicked arts. Rather than yield he goes to jail on a false accusation and lives there seven years. He will not compromise his soul. His was the courage which later enabled the martyrs to say, " My conscience I cannot submit." So Joseph mounts to the high places in Egypt and becomes the prime minister of Pharaoh and the saviour of his own people. Eighteen hundred years after this, the Galilean Prophet tells of a young man who leaves home under different circumstances. He is tired of his father's restraint. Perhaps someone has told him of the magnificence of Egypt and he must see it. He cries, " The daily life on the hills of Judea is fit only for goat-herders. Let me taste the culture and the joyous life of society," a sentence that might have been spoken on the hillsides of New England, or the prairies of the West or the plantations of the South this very day. So the father, with mistaken kindness, gives him his money and away he goes.

The opening of the ball is magnificent. You have seen the artist's conception of it—the young man in the center, lifting high the wine glass, the gayest youths of the capital around him. The smiles of dazzling beauties entrance him, the queen of the courtesans makes him her own. Days

and nights go by in wild carousal. Occasionally a white face he left in Judea seems looking at him in the mazes of the dance, and he thinks of his broken promises, but he drowns them in wild debauch. Notice how the artist puts in the panel at the side the picture of that same youth with money gone, the swineherd of a foreigner, eating the husks which the swine have left. Well that he repented before it was too late and said, "I will arise and go to my father!"

These are stories out of the long ago and in other lands. May I bring you their counterpart in America? There is a youth running a peddler's cart in Vermont. He is too large for his surroundings; his opportunities are limited, his abilities are great. He goes to Boston as clerk, and then partner in one of its great establishments. Little by little he goes on to violate the laws of common honesty, to laugh at the sanctity of marriage, to ruin railroads as he had ruined men, to yield himself to the blandishments of temptations, and at last here in New York he pays the price in blood and lies dead by the hand of an assassin at the age of thirty-seven. Ask some man who knows to take you down Broadway and he will show you where his blood stained the street. If you want to live and face life in the great White Way in New York or anywhere else, note the footprints of the men who walked that path before you.

There was another young man, born on Cape Cod, coming at last to the metropolis of New England. You could see him in the daytime running his wheelbarrow loaded with fish where the fishing schooners brought to the wharves the harvest of the sea; but at night you would find him with a little company of those who loved and feared God, telling of the peace and blessedness of the Christian life. This young man mounts by virtue and

thrift until he stands at the top and founds a university which is to-day sending out thousands of men who ought to profit by his life as an example. Which path is yours, my dear son?

I hope you will remember the example of Theodore Roosevelt and listen to his words: "Don't shirk, don't cheat, and play the game." If you shrink from the hard contests where men must win, at hazard of their life, and at the risk of all they hold dear, you will forfeit the approval of God and men. Are you saying, "I want to live my own life"? But he that liveth in evil pleasure is dead while he liveth. You may call it tame and "Mid-Victorian," but listen to Tennyson:

"Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."

You do not insist on your right to "live your own life" when you go to athletics or college or business. The trainer tells you not only what you must do but even what you must eat if you are to be on a football team. You must cut out every indulgence of the body in order that you may be at the best physically, and you are willing to pay that price if you can have a place on the 'varsity football team. When you go to college you have to follow a prescribed course. There are, to be sure, some electives, but these only come after great fundamental intellectual training has preceded them. If you do not comply with the requirements of the college curriculum, out you go. If you think you can have your own way when you start in to learn a business or a trade, you will soon be disabused of your false notion. If you cannot comply with the general purpose of the firm for which you work, your desk will soon be empty in the

office. The only true method which wins success in any field is not to insist upon your own way, but to seek eagerly for the best way and having found out that way, you can walk therein and find at the end of it the largest possible success.

Let me ask you, fathers and mothers, are you sending out your children so that they will be safe amid the temptations which will dog their steps in country as well as in city? What ideals are you holding up before them and is your example an example for good or for evil? You are asking about what your children shall do, what their business shall be. There is another question far more important. You are saying—Is the young man strong, is he educated, is he smart? There is a more important question—Is the young man *safe!* "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own life." What constitutes a model young man? Chesterfield had sounded the whole gamut of the social life of his day and he said, "I have run the silly round of pleasure and have done with them all. I have exhausted all the evils of Pandora's box without finding Hope at the bottom." You can lie and steal and drink, if you will, and you may think you can get away with it, but in the long run you cannot. "Rejoice, oh young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in thy youth and walk in the ways of thy heart and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment!"

You see an old man. Maybe you watched him trying to sleep in the park. Marks of a ruined life were on his face and you say, "Spare me from an end like that." But unless you are true you are laying the foundation for it. You say you can get along without the Church of Christ, without the Christian religion, but can you? With the world, the flesh and the devil massing all their forces against

you, you will need every help which God and the Church can give you if you are to come off victorious. To be able to say at the last, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith" is a more glorious thing than any boast you can make of earthly position and power. The law of the harvest is to reap more than you sow. Therefore Boardman was right when he said, "Sow an act and you reap a habit. Sow a habit and you reap a character. Sow a character and you reap a destiny!" You can sow wild oats enough in fifteen minutes to keep you reaping fifty years! You must have help from somewhere. There is only one source. "His name was called Jesus for He should save His people from their sin." So the question is not, "are you smart?" but "are you safe?" Not "are you rich?" but "is it well with *you!*" The smarter the man, the greater risk he runs; the richer a man the more manifold his temptations. You are looking after the education of your son. You want a fine business opportunity for him. You choose your occupation or dwelling place with deliberation and care, but the greatest thing is, where will you and the children be safe? Settle that first. You are deep sea voyagers. You will need a chart and a pilot. Take on board *the* Pilot. He has sounded all the depths and He has the only chart for the waters over which you sail. So shall you come full cargoed and safely into port.

X

THE PERILS OF MIDDLE LIFE

"Quit you like men, be strong."—I CORINTHIANS 16: 13.

IF there is any time in human life when we should like the sun to stand still, it is in the period from thirty-five to fifty, covering "the striving thirties, the fiery forties, the faithful fifties." At no period in life are there so many great things done. At no time does the blood course with steadier flow and the muscles knit themselves more firmly for heroic struggles. For the quick action of the stadium, the twenties are better than the thirties; but for the steady strain which requires trained muscle and the ability for long protracted toil of brawn or brain, these years mark the zenith of human life and effort. If we could always live in our thirties and forties, with the sun hanging just past the meridian, how happy we should be! It is no disparagement of youth or old age to say that the greatest triumphs of life are the triumphs of maturity. Alexander and Napoleon in arms, Pitt and Summerfield in oratory, Keats and Shelley in poetry, stand for the great achievements of youth; Michelangelo and Titian in art, Adams and Gladstone in statecraft, Goethe, Victor Hugo and Holmes in literature, represent the possibilities of achievement in old age; but each of these classes stands for the unusual and the unexpected.

It is not the second and third decades of life, nor the sixth and seventh which are the most fruitful in achievement, it is the fourth and fifth. Moses is forty when he is first moved by the great impulse to deliver his people.

Joshua is forty when he brings back the report which makes him a marked man for life. Luther began the period of his greatest usefulness at forty, and the same is true of Wesley. Chaucer began to write "Canterbury Tales" when he was in his forties, and Walter Scott was forty-three when he began to publish the "Waverley Novels." "Paradise Lost" was published when Milton was fifty, and Bunyan wrote the Pilgrim's Progress about the same age. Pitt is Prime Minister at forty-eight, Webster is forty-eight when he makes his reply to Hayne, and Clay is forty-four when he makes his great speeches on the Missouri Compromise. Wellington is forty-six at Waterloo, and Cæsar forty-two when he crosses the Rubicon.

In the mercantile world comparatively few reach great wealth before they are forty, and the twenty years thereafter are the boldest and most successful years of operation. Experience waits upon judgment; friendships bear fruit in business alliances; breadth of view, steadiness of purpose, strength and tenacity, knowledge of men and motives,—all these unite to bring a man to wealth and political power. But there is another side of middle life that greatly moves me. I am accustomed to urge young people to the formation of good habits. I urge them to keep clear of temptations. I affirm that every victory gained will make the next one easier; and all that I have said is true, but I am saddened by the fact that youth is not the only period of temptation, and that some who have apparently escaped the rocks of youth make an awful shipwreck in middle life. The defalcations that stagger the world are not the defalcations of youth. The tremendous frauds which have shaken New York and Chicago in the last few months were by men in middle life. Nothing is so terrible as to see a man fall from a dizzy height in the day of his success, to see his laurels wither on his brow before

he lies down to die. To buy the "merry madness of an hour," with the long penitence of tears!

It is in these years that the world is staggered by the awful cataclysms of the man in the limelight, the hero of many battles, the leader in all virtue going down to ignominious defeat. What a chapter of this sort the great names of the Bible open: Here is Samson, strongest of men, laying his head on Delilah's lap, and so going to grind the grists of the Philistines! Here is King Saul, with fair promise, going to the devil,—or to the witch, which is the same thing,—before he is out of his fifties. Here is David with the blush of youth and innocence upon his cheek, singing the holiest of songs, but after God has lifted him to his throne, "a man after His own heart," he falls from the throne into the mire and becomes a murderer to satisfy his lust. In the New Testament it is Judas and Ananias and Demas, men in middle life, who make awful shipwreck after once having kept holy company. What a chapter our national history affords! Arnold was forty when he betrayed his country; Aaron Burr was in his forties when he killed Hamilton and plotted to set up another government; Tweed was in his forties when he robbed New York of sixty-five millions; and the men who have lately stolen their millions in New York and elsewhere have been not far from the same age.

The temptations which are open to men in middle life are tremendous by virtue of their position and power, and I shall be very happy if any word of mine may help to fortify a soul at a time when he most needs help. Maturity is the period of fiercest temptations. The animal propensities are at their strongest; the blood is hot and rushes like a torrent to the finger-tips. Maturity is headstrong and dominant. It is quick-tempered and brooks no restraint. It has the wilfulness of conscious strength. It

represents opportunities that no other age presents, and so temptations from within are abetted by circumstances from without, and there is but one result that can come to the unguarded. He who "warms both hands at the fires of life" must take heed that they are not burned.

Let me have a word with those who are face to face with such problems and temptations as I have indicated. There are some great principles by which a man must be governed. First of all, let me say, do not let the child-spirit die within you,—the spirit which "sees visions and dreams dreams," which worships ideals. The danger is that in this dread actual all the sweet and entrancing dreams and ideals of life will vanish. You will lose faith in your fellows, you have been deceived so many times. The men who professed most, deceived most, and thereafter all professions are at a discount. Your hand is against every man's, and so every man's hand is against you. There is no law but the law of strength. It is the survival, often, not of the fittest, but of the most unfit. When you have lost confidence in men and closed your heart against friendship and love, the best things in life have gone out. You may go on building buildings, or running factories, or bickering over houselots, or estimating stocks and bonds, but you are only an automaton. You are a schemer; you are of the earth earthy; the joy of life has gone out and all the victory of life has gone with it. You care for nobody and nobody cares for you. You and your money live together and will perish together, and you deserve the fate that will come to you. The money you leave to your children will be tainted money. It may not have the taint of actual corruption, but it has blood on it. It was wrung out of the hands of unwilling and despairing men, the life-blood of good hopes and unselfish purposes stained it and every dollar of it made the recipient incalculably poorer.

When once you have given yourself up to the itch of accumulation, you have severed all connection with the life and teaching of Jesus; you banish from your soul the reward of every beatitude which He ever uttered, and invite every anathema which He ever pronounced. If there was anyone with whom He had no patience, it was a man who had laid up his treasure on earth and was not rich toward God.

Of a kindred with this worldliness of men is their indifference toward God. The awful tragedy of a full barn and an empty soul! You think you can get on without God, but when you come to measure it in all its significance, what sentence would be a more fearful epitaph than this one—"Without God and without hope in the world!" Is it any wonder that men go crazy? The country never had so many insane people in proportion to its population as now. Is it any wonder that people die young? We have increased the average of our race by looking after the children but the man who is fifty years old to-day has not as good a chance for life as his grandfather had. The pace is too hot, the strain is too heavy.

It often happens in middle life that "the inner light fails." Noble aspirations are lost sight of, the dreams of youth no longer move us. Can you imagine a more thrilling statement of it all than Wordsworth's:

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy,
Shades of the prison house begin to close
Upon the growing boy;
But he beholds the light and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy.
The youth who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away
And fade into the light of common day."

Many a man would give all his possessions if life only looked to him as once it did. If he could still see God and angels his step would bound where now it crawls. It is a sad thing when the angels come no more. Of old, Jacob, with his head upon a stone, had intercourse with heaven, and woke to duty and delight. Our pillows of down are but restless, and if we dream they are dreams of the world and the flesh and we wake only to selfish toil.

I must remind you that maturity is the period of greatest responsibility. We have given hostages to fortune. We are in the productive age. Youth is the age of preparation, old age is the time of rest. If we are to have that rest, we must gain the means for it now. Our children are to be fitted for life, to be educated and cared for until they are able to take care of themselves. In view of all these facts, the temptation is to make middle life a hot fight, to press to the front at any cost, and since the competition is so great we grow bitter toward our neighbours. There is no longer joy in nature nor in art. The saints of literature have lost their power to move. The sweet amenities of social life are a burden and the daughters of music are brought low. Responsibility has slain the dearest children of the soul and henceforth light and song and laughter come no more.

One of the saddest sights of middle life is a disappointed and discouraged man. I meet such men every day, and I am sure I am addressing thousands of them now. Others who had no better start than himself have succeeded. He sees the man who worked beside him as a clerk at the head of a business that pays him tens of thousands every year. That man, well fed and groomed, drives to his store at noon, while he goes downtown with the jostling sleepy crowd that sees the stars fade in the morning. Perhaps he was in business for himself. His partner was a rascal,

the market went against him, fire consumed his savings, or sickness sapped his strength and he saw all his property go. His hair is frosted; his lip has the curl of the cynic; he suspects everybody, and he is an uncomfortable man to have in the home or the church or the store. Nobody likes to have him about and he knows it. The world is out of joint. Even memory is a lash and hope is dead. Poor fellow! It is hard. Once he thought he would be famous—a great teacher, a great orator, a famous author, minister, lawyer, manufacturer. He would make a fortune. He had made up his mind how to spend it. He would build a hall or a library, a school or a church in his native town. He would support an institute or a hospital in the city where he had made his fortune. He did not mean to be selfish with what he gained; but it is all over. The time came when he had to lay his ambition in its grave, and say with white lips, "It can never be. Dust to dust, ashes to ashes."

That is a critical time for any man. If he is a coward, he will become a thief or an embezzler or a suicide. If you value your life, take a new account of stock and begin business for your soul. As Maude Royden says: "Discipline yourself intellectually. It is not too late to learn. Set to work and discipline *yourself*. One of the sad things about middle age is that other people do not discipline us in the way they used to when we were young. We can always have the most comfortable chair in the room. Nobody will tell us that we are eating too much, or that we are eating the wrong things. Nobody will quite dare to utterly discount our judgment on anything." It is not too late to change our attitude. A certain peace of mind should come to you and a certain sense of balance and serenity. "Take time,—even if you have to take it by violence,—take time to be quiet." It is not offensive for the

young to be in a hurry. They have so much to do, so much to learn, so much to know; but there is something repellent about the middle age that has no serenity and no poise, that is always racketting about mentally and has no peace in its heart. Of course other people have disappointed you and misjudged you and treated you unkindly and all that, but how much of that was your own fault? How much have you disappointed them?

"Middle age should bring a deep kindliness of view, and a deeper understanding of oneself and other people." A great English preacher says: "Listen, be silent, pray; because your time is shorter than it was twenty years ago, it is all the more necessary that you should direct it rightly now. Life and death are to you greater adventures than when you were young. You had more time then to make mistakes. Now you have less time, more knowledge. Go directly on your path and remember that death is not the end; it is only the beginning of something better."

As you value your life, take a new account of stock and begin business for your soul. Some things are gone and some things have failed. What is left? The call of duty and the rewards which always come for duty done—the "well done" of God, which is better than the applause of men; the hope of heaven which is better than the hope of sensual things. All the treasures you have tried to heap up, you must leave behind you; there are no dollar-marks on gravestones. The treasures in which you may still be rich are the treasures you can never lose.

"It's wiser being good than bad;
It's safer being meek than fierce;
It's fitter being sane than mad.
My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That after Last returns the First,
Tho' a wide compass round be fetched;

That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blest once prove accurst."

The Gospel that I love to preach is the Gospel of another chance. Christ never gave up anyone who did not refuse his chance. My disappointed friend, I am commissioned of God to say to you that the best things are ahead. You may yet be a rich man, a wise man, a strong man, and all that with the riches which are not tainted and the wisdom which does not pass away and the strength which never faileth!

XI

THE TREASURES OF AGE

"And it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light."—ZECHARIAH 14: 7.

TO be Court preacher and address the crowned heads of Europe would be a great distinction. Is it not quite as great a distinction to be Court preacher and address, as I do to-day, the crowned heads of America! For the Bible says, " The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the ways of righteousness."

If I were to speak only to those who acknowledge themselves to be old, what a small audience I should have! A child likes to make himself out older than he is, but who ever heard of a man (much less a woman) wanting to make himself out older than he is, when he gets on into years? To be sure, after one gets to be eighty or more, he takes delight in asking his friends, " How old do you think I am? " and when the friend says " sixty-five," or " seventy," he rolls the full number of his years as a sweet morsel under his tongue. At sixteen one likes to have a birthday cake with sixteen candles; but who wants to have a birthday cake with *sixty* candles? They would melt the frosting! When one gets to be that age, the words which the minister repeats about " three score years and ten " begin to take on a personal character, and we feel there is no special reason why they should be so often repeated. But let us be thankful that old age is a " movable feast." The doctors will probably tell you that a man is as old as his arteries, but anybody who really knows will tell you that

a man is as old as he thinks he is, for age is not a matter of years at all, but of hopes, of ambitions, of interests, and of faith.

About the best book on old age outside the Bible, even surpassing Cicero's famous treatise, is "Over the Tea Cups," by Oliver Wendell Holmes, whom I knew in his eighties. It was a benediction to walk down Beacon Street with him to his home and to see that contagious smile and hear his merry chuckle. He says that, "at eighty a man has just about time to get warmly settled in his nest. No more haggard responsibility to keep him awake nights. No more goading ambitions; he knows he has done his best. No more jealousies—if he were weak enough to feel such ignoble stirrings in his more active season. Everybody treats him with deference."

I told you last week about the "striving thirties, the fiery forties and the faithful fifties." Perhaps it would be proper now to speak of the "sober sixties, and solemn seventies." Holmes has an interesting description of middle life and old age. He says: "At fifty your vessel is staunch, and you are on deck with the rest in all weathers. At sixty the vessel still floats and you are in the cabin. At seventy you, with a few fellow passengers, are on a raft. At eighty you are on a spar, to which possibly one or two or three friends of about your own age are still clinging. After that you must expect soon to find yourself alone, if you are still afloat, with only a life-preserver to keep your old, white bearded chin above the water."

But we are rushing into old age too fast. Mark Twain wrote when nearly seventy-one, "When I passed the seventieth milestone, I realized that I had entered into a new country and a new atmosphere. I was become undeniably old. Since then I have lived an ideal existence, and I now believe what Choate said, that 'the best of life begins at

seventy,' for your work is done. You know that you have done your best, let the quality of your work be as it may. You have earned your holiday—a holiday of peace and contentment, and thenceforth to the setting of the sun, nothing will break it, nothing interrupt." Holmes calls sixty-two "the grand climacteric of life." Emerson was about that age when he wrote

"It is time to be old,
To take in sail,
The God of bounds
Who sets to seas a shore,
Came to me in his fatal rounds,
And said, 'No more.'"

He closes his poem, which he entitles "Terminus," with these words of hope:

"Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime;
'Lowly faithful, banish fear,
Right onward drive unharmed:
The port, well worth the cruise, is near
And every wave is charmed.'"

Benjamin Jowett gives some good advice. He says a man of sixty should live a quiet, open-air life. He should collect the young about him. He should set other men to work. He ought at sixty to have acquired authority, reticence and freedom from personality. He may truly think of the last years of life as the best, every year is better than the last if he knows how to use it. Men may not feel old at sixty, they may emphatically decline to be described as old, nevertheless they have reached the youth of old age. It is always a cheer and a solace to men of that age to read of the achievements of men long after that period. We like to know that Cato learned Greek at eighty, that Goethe was writing Faust at the same age.

Michelangelo was working on St. Peter's at eighty-seven. Titian was painting at ninety-nine when cut off by the plague. West did his best painting at seventy-nine, Humboldt worked until he was nearly ninety, and Bancroft reached the same age. Dandolo was elected Doge of Venice at eighty-four. When ninety-four and blind, he stormed Constantinople and died as Doge at ninety-seven. Tennyson, Jefferson and Bismarck lived to be eighty-three, and Bryant, Benjamin Franklin and Sir Isaac Newton, eighty-four. Oliver Wendell Holmes died at eighty-five, Carlyle at eighty-six. Gladstone lived to be eighty-nine and Sir Christopher Wren was ninety.

I do not think Emerson was quite fair when he said, "We do not count a man's years until he has nothing else to count." At any rate, it is true that we all hope to live to be old. Old age is one of the promises which are held out in the good Book as the fruit of good living. It would be a sad thing if we are hastening toward a bitter experience. So the question comes, "How shall age be made a thing of delight?" There are a few simple rules we do well to remember. First of all, the mind keeps young when it is trusted. Therefore fill it with useful knowledge. Become interested in great causes, anchor yourself to some wholesome responsibilities. Keep your friendship in repair. Enlarge the circle of your interests and opportunities and friends. Remember also that as you get into the years, the machine is getting old and will not stand the strain which once it would. With careful use, an old machine and an old man may run on for years and do good work, but a strain or shock or a multiplication of demands will constitute a wear and tear which will destroy the machine and end life. So we must toil with moderation and watch carefully the effect. With many limitations which might otherwise burden and annoy, I should like to remind you

especially of the treasures which are the peculiar property of age.

1. First come the treasures of the mind. The wisest men and women, other things being equal, must be the old. The accumulations of youth and middle age have been stored away. Works of imagination may belong to youth. In the fields of romance and poetry it has won its laurels but in history and philosophy age and experience win the palm.

> *"Age is opportunity no less*
> *Than youth itself, tho' in another dress;*
> *And as the evening twilight fades away,*
> *The sky is filled with stars invisible by day."*

The treasures of knowledge belong to age, but age does not vaunt itself, " is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly." Intoxicated with the first quaff of knowledge, youth boasts of its wisdom, but old age seeing the vast ocean of undiscovered truth, looks upon its accumulations as a little thing.

2. Old age is rich in the treasures of memory. When the fire burns low and the feet go but slowly to new joys; when the eye grows dim to new sights, and the heart responds to new joys with a sober beat, then the halls of memory swing open, the old faces fill all the air, the old songs and the old laughter and the old joys. The child looks in at the door and says, " Grandma is alone, but I hear her talking." Dear heart, he does not know that Grandma is holding a reception this afternoon. It is her wedding day. The smell of roses is in the air. The arm on which she leaned for forty years is slipped around her for the first time, as his wife, and the first kiss of the bridegroom is on her lips. The old lovelight is in the dim eyes and the heart that beats but slowly under present joy

throbs, until the old hand shakes, at the holy joys of memory!

How rich you are! All the ships of memory are sailing your way. Memory, like a good landscape gardener, hides the dark and rugged places of the journey and we see only fair fields and pleasant vistas. You think you are poor? Make a bargain with me. For how much will you sell the memories of childhood and youth? How much for a baby crowing in the cradle? How much for the happy years when you rocked the cradle and mixed the bread and worked on the farm, and watched the children come to man's estate? And, Christian, what will you take for your recollections of the mercy seat, for Bethel and Peniel, for your Carmels of conquest and your Hermons of transfiguration? What would you take and never sing any more: "Oh! Happy Day That Fixed My Choice." For how much would you blot out the recollection of "Jesus Sought Me When a Stranger," and "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"? No, no! There are no holy memories for sale. They are priceless in their value—the happy treasures of the saints! No thief can steal them; the gnawing tooth of rust and time cannot destroy them.

"Earth still has music left in store,
While memory sighs and sings."

3. But even more precious are the riches of character. Character is the precipitate from the stream of conduct. The years run by as sand in the stream where the old miners stood to wash for gold. That which is left behind is the real value of the passing years.

In the nature of things, no character can be so well rounded and so nobly developed as that of age. It takes one set of graces for youth and quite another for the days "when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong

men bow themselves, and those that look out of the windows are darkened." It is much to be brave in the time of battle, it is even more to be patient in the time of adversity. Napoleon at Jena and Austerlitz was a hero, but at St. Helena he was crushed, ill-tempered and morose. It takes a great soul cheerfully to make place for another in the race of life, to accept gracefully the inevitable, to let another do the work when we feel we could do it better ourselves. But it is poor wine that grows sour with age. Character, like fruit, must have frost to ripen it. God lets us grow old to show the world that He can sustain us and make us sweet and ripe. It is not the purpose of life to grow a tree which shall so run its roots into the ground that it cannot be separated from the soil. Its purpose is rather to ripen to harvest, for the life that now is and for that which is to come, so that the Christian shall at last drop from the boughs of life into the lap of God like mellow fruit. Old age sets the crowning glory to character.

"The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new life through chinks that time has made;
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home."

4. The greatest of the treasures of age are the treasures of hope. Holmes beautifully says, "The relation of man with his Maker grows more intimate and confidential with advancing years." If the past cheers the heart of age, the future challenges and beckons it—weakness facing eternal strength, the changing, facing the changeless life, a tearless land where injustice is ended, where pain shall cease, where the friendless find old friends and where the separated are mated again. It is *reunion* after this life that we really want:

"O thou soul of my soul, I shall clasp thee again!
And with God be the rest."

What can be finer than to think of the life to come as a life of splendid "adventure," where all that has made this life beautiful is to be pursued to heights never reached here; to know the truth and live in it forever, to be in an atmosphere of glad assurance and holy challenge, to have those associations which come by the unerring gravitation of soul to kindred souls, where nothing shall keep us from finding life's withheld completions, and to know at last as we are known.

Winter may be on your head, but keep eternal summer in your soul. If only your heart is warm you may carry cheerfulness and love with you into the teens of your second century if you can last so long. If God lets you stay after your three score and ten years it is that you may show His might to the generations that follow you and prove "at eventide it shall be light." Then magnify His grace, triumphant over all your fears. Don't fret that your eyes are getting dim. God is so busy getting a new mansion for you that He is not especially concerned to repair the windows of the old one. The hand that shakes so it can no longer hold the earthly tools will be quite a different thing when it lifts the harp in another life. He who hath been with thee hitherto will not forsake thee now. He who gave thee the treasures of heart and mind and memory and enriched thee with the far-off harvest of tears will bring thee at last to thine eternal inheritance. He does not ask you for the struggle and toil of middle life. He only asks that you may vindicate His care and mercy by showing a triumphant and a happy spirit amid the tests of age. There is a coronation day ahead, bear yourself like a king or queen for your throne is great and eternal. Prove yourself as good a soldier on guard as you were in battle. In the brave days of Greece the runner carried a torch in his hands and when he had reached his bounds passed it on

to the next runner. So you pass on to those who come after you the torch of a holy life. Be sure to keep it burning. Never lay it down, never go so slow that there will be no breath to fan it. Keep the light burning, and when another shall take it from your nerveless hands may the gleam of it send him bounding on his way.

Mrs. Barbauld lived to be eighty-one and she wrote these words, which Wordsworth said he would rather have written than any poem of his own:

"'Life! we have been long together
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear,—
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not 'Good-night,' but in some brighter clime
Bid me 'Good-morning.'"

XII

THE LORD'S PRAYER

"Our Father which art in Heaven hallowed be thy name."
—MATTHEW 6: 9.

IF we wish to know the value of prayer whom should we question? Certainly not the man who never prays. When one has learned how to pray he has learned the greatest secret of the Christian life. A wise man has said—"If you truly pray, one of two things must happen—your praying will make you stop sinning or your sinning will make you stop praying."

Jesus taught prayer both by precept and by example. He left us the universal prayer. It is a brief prayer and a searching one. It may be doubted if it was ever to be used as a formula. It certainly was not to be made the occasion of formality. It is a model and not a mould. It was not meant that we should of necessity always pray in the same words, for in the two records we have of this prayer, the words used are not identical. Nor is it a necessity that every time we pray we should feel obliged to add these words to ours. In broad terms we are to catch the spirit and fashion of it and then pray as the Holy Spirit may indite.

Our great schools have their mottoes—legends engraved upon their seals and over their arches. The portal of the school of prayer has on its outer side—"Not as I will but as Thou wilt" and on the inner side—"According to your faith be it unto you."

When a child enters school its first lesson is one of

obedience and trust. It must accept the superior wisdom of the teacher, often on what seems to the scholar inadequate reasons. If one is really the teacher it must be obvious to the scholar that his is the superior wisdom. So in the school of prayer—one does not matriculate for the purpose of giving God information. Many a poor student has found that out at bitter cost. Such a student thinks he has no use for prayer unless he can get what he wants. He is such that he knows what he desires and is direct and importunate. The Master must first teach him the " abc " of prayer. It would be no mercy on the part of God to put the tremendous engine of prayer into the hands of an ignorant and erring mortal and you may be sure God will not do it. Shall a man who cannot guide his own life undertake to guide God's universe? Rest assured you are not strong enough or wise enough or good enough to dam up God's cisterns or drive His sun. If God inspires you to pray for rain He will answer your prayer but you will have to be much in prayer in order to get the message that God may send. " What! " says our student. " Can I not get what I want when I pray? " O foolish one and slow of heart, would you have a poor second choice when God can give you the best? Is your own wisdom better than the wisdom of God?

If Sir Oliver Lodge was right when he said that however great might be the undiscovered forces of Nature the forces of prayer were greater, it still behooves us to understand what is the secret of prayer. That prayer is mighty, God's book is constantly declaring. I have often meditated on the affirmation of James the Apostle—" The effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth " and then I think he must have made in his manuscript a long dash and after it written the word " MUCH." Our revisers have paraphrased the King James version. Weymouth says, " The heartfelt

supplication of a righteous man exerts a mighty influence." Moffatt's paraphrase is " The prayers of the righteous have a powerful effect." Both of those translations are pure blank verse but if you want the blaze of poetic imagery that will thrill you through and through, turn to the King James version and you find it in the single word—" MUCH."

Before we enter the school of prayer, let us hear the Master's words—" Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you." Will the King of Kings indeed give me audience? Can He spare time for me? Men and women cross continents and seas to go into the audience chamber of a modern king. What could be so thrilling as to have audience with the King of Kings? As I have told you, the essence of prayer is the practice of the presence of God. The highest kind of prayer is too sacred to share with anyone but Him. I wish you would have, like Daniel and like Jesus, a time for the practice of prayer and also a place. Unless you have *some* time to pray you will be likely soon to have *no* time to pray. Let me remind you of the blessedness of heart communion. Is there anybody on earth or in heaven that you have loved to talk with—any soul wiser or purer or sweeter than your own? Is it like a green spot in the desert to hold communion with such? When you parted did you feel ready again to take up the battle of life; to be true and steadfast; stout and brave? Did the stars burn brighter and the skies seem clearer? Was there a bounding hope within and was life worth living? I hope there is still one heart that loves you and that you can talk to, and if that heart is wise enough to be your guide you need not be hopeless or homeless,—but multiply all that a thousandfold and you cannot reach the glorious communion and fellowship which the practice of prayer will give you. A Master in Israel has said " To give utter-

ance to certain questions and plead certain promises is an easy thing and can be learned by human wisdom but to pray in the spirit, to speak words that reach and touch God, such praying depends first upon our hearing God's voice." Just as far as we listen to the voice and language God speaks, shall we learn to speak in the voice and language that God hears.

"Talk with us, Lord, Thyself reveal,
While here on earth we rove;
Speak to our hearts, and let us feel
The kindling of Thy love."

It will result from such praying that we shall have faith in God. We shall feel that although we are hemmed in on every side there is always a clear sky over us and a heaven that bends low to our need. There is no bed so stony and no pillow so hard that God does not set up a ladder to heaven crowded with angels to come and go. We can take up our burden without complaining and bear it without fatigue when we keep our tryst with God.

"With Thee conversing, we forget
All time, and toil, and care;
Labour is rest, and pain is sweet,
If Thou, my God, art here."

Do not come away from such a fellowship too soon. If you do you will come empty-handed and God's express office may have a valuable package for you that will remain unclaimed.

Now that we know the underlying basis of prayer let us consider the prayer of our Lord. It begins—" Our Father " —that was a new word for the men who prayed. What shaft of prayer was ever winged with such a feather? To be sure, the heathen had spoken of men as the children of God. Paul quotes Aratus, a heathen poet, as saying: " For

we are also His offspring." But even the Old Testament did not apprehend God the Father as the lover of the soul. He was Jehovah. He was Elohim, the ruler; El Shaddai, the Almighty. But Jesus touches a chord silent until now when he says "Our Father." The bravest and wisest of us are but children—ignorant and helpless—

"An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry."

He is not the God of the pantheist or the deist. He is a tender and loving personality—too wise to err, too good to be untrue. Our Father! how blessed to be able to say it and to feel it, when He shrouds Himself in mystery; when the air is filled with storm and all earthly hopes fail; when the dear faces fade out of our sight and we walk our via dolorosa. Not man alone nor God apart but God with us and within us making us strong for the day of trial. God is your Father—do not demean yourself. A king's son must not behave himself unseemly. Nothing base and mean was meant to have place in your heart. Nourish your self-respect and live worthy of your station. "Our Father" —two short words but if we can truly say them we have come a long way into the heart of this prayer. We are to hallow that name by the words of our lips and by the works of our hands. All the blessed institutions of the Gospel are named from Him—"His Day"—"His Book" —"His Church." They must be held holy and sacred if we would honour and hallow His name. So the first cry of the soul in this model prayer is not for self, for ease, or welfare; it is a cry for God. The first and most radiant Pleiad of the seven petitions is this: "Hallowed be thy name."

"Thy kingdom come" not mine, Thy will, not mine be

done. We might spend an hour discussing what that kingdom is. Not such a one as His disciples had expected, where they could wield earthly and physical power. The kingdom is not eating nor drinking but it is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. "Righteousness and peace" when on every side men do the will of God in an ordered life seeking only that there may be the perfect peace which those hearts know who find their spring and motive in the love and will of God.

"I worship Thee, sweet will of God,
And all Thy ways adore;
And every day I live I seem
To love Thee more and more.
Ill that He blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right which seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will."

The prayer is half over before we ask for "daily bread" and, notice, it is *bread* alone. If you will study carefully the context you will see that what it really means is just a chance to live and face the tasks of life. "*Our* Daily Bread." What we beg; steal; cheat, or get by force is not *ours*. A fair day's work for a fair day's pay, and the pay is not ours until we have earned it. Few of us I suppose would be content to utter Agur's prayer—

"Give me neither poverty nor riches;
Feed me with food convenient for me;
Lest I be full and deny Thee and say
'Who is the Lord?'
Or lest I be poor and steal
And take the name of my God in vain."

If we could have the luxuries of life most of us could get along without the necessities. We would like a ten-story competency; full barns and sure treasures so that we might

be exempt from the need of daily prayer and say "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up, you can take it easy."

Here is another new word neither Nature nor law nor society seems to have much place for—the word "Forgive." How much we need to utter it for ourselves. In our pride we sometimes say "What I want is justice." But that is the last thing that any of us want. If we had justice done us none of us should see salvation. Can you put it half as strongly as Shakespeare puts it in "Measure for Measure"—

> *"Alas! Alas!*
> *Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;*
> *And he that might the 'vantage best have took*
> *Found out the remedy. How would you be*
> *If He, which is the top of judgment, should*
> *But judge you as you are? Oh, think on that*
> *And mercy then will breathe within your lips*
> *Like man new made."*

Remember it is written, there is forgiveness for us only as we forgive. Unto every one who has transgressed against us we need to say "May God forgive me as fully as I forgive thee."

And then for our "Temptation" how blessed to feel that there was one who was tempted in all points like as we are yet was without sin. How manifold are the temptations that we face. With appetite and passion on every side how much we all need to offer that prayer. And then there is another class of sins which the Saviour reprobated more than any other and these are the sins of pride, and cruelty, and selfishness, and hate. Men and women practise these and still move in good society. Jesus' words hissed like a lash when He spoke of those who oppressed others but would bear no burdens themselves. He said it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle

than for the rich and selfish to enter heaven. Publicans and harlots were more likely candidates for God's grace than they. Are we careful enough to pray, in the face of pride and selfishness "Lead us not into temptation"!

Well says Washington Gladden: "Many a man prays at the family altar, 'Lead us not into temptation' and then rises from his knees, packs his movables and goes, with his family, where Lot went—straight to Sodom."

We do well to pray, "Make my spiritual strength so great and me so pure that the evil things which surround me may find no ally in my own soul. Make me like Jesus, so that when the enemy comes he shall find nothing in me!"

"Deliver us from evil"—some have said this should read—"Deliver us from the evil one" but the greatest of German scholars, Tholuck, shows the reasonableness of the more comprehensive word. The sad monotone of the world is "Deliver us from evil" but what is evil? One man says it is financial ruin; another says it is sickness; it is the cry which fills the hovel where want keeps guard at the door, while Starvation brings out its victim; mothers and fathers praying for sons and daughters whose sins have found them out. But the greatest of all the cries for help is for a physician who can "minister to a mind diseased," for a power that can take the sting out of death and change defeat into eternal victory. What is pain and bankruptcy and shame for a night when the heavens are kindling with the wrath of God? For food and raiment and friends and power it may go well or ill; it matters little. "I shall one day shake them off as a tree casts her leaves." But I have a conscience which will forever keep me company. I am going to my grave, but I am going *through* it! What is on the other side? Let sorrow and sickness shake the tenement into ruin, but let the tenant escape unharmed. Let

me look for abiding joy in His unending day. If there is any power that can bring that deliverance I need it and I need it now. Do not mock me.

Our prayer began "Our Father" and Jesus said "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" and since He died to save I stay my heart by faith upon it. My prayers will be answered. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, but love can change his heart. My sins, which were many, can be forgiven and I may walk unharmed where dangers are thicker than the snowflakes in the winter's air. Not only shall the wicked past be blotted out but a wicked nature shall be changed and the unholy things which once I loved I shall hate forever.

I have in my studio the famous picture "The Rest in Egypt." It is night on the Libyan Desert. The stars are shining faintly through the darkness. Afar the great pyramid of Cheops keeps guard. Near at hand stands the silent Sphinx, her sightless eyes looking out over the shifting sands of the desert. In her face no look of tenderness; in her stony heart no love. Not far from the pedestal on which she rests an oriental rug is spread and on it lies a sleeping traveler. In the dim light one may see the outline of the huge camel resting near the traveler's side. But on the top of the pedestal, reclining her head against the breast of the Sphinx, lies a woman in whose face and form are grace and dignity combined, and on whose white bosom a strange light seems to play. At first I wondered at its meaning, but, as I pondered, my wonders ceased for on that mother's breast I saw the Child who was born in Bethlehem. A sweet light flashes from His open eyes, the East seems to catch the glow, and the stars flame up with sudden glory. Slumber for Mary and Joseph in the sands under the shadow of the Sphinx, with a light which can do nothing more than reveal their loneliness. But in their

midst there is the Light of the World, under whose glad rays the nations are yet to claim their destiny.

You can put out your taper, kindled at a human flame. It is sunrise. The Son behind the sun comes with healing in His wings and we give Him challenge as He draws near. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" and we exult in the triumphant answer—"I that speak in righteousness mighty to save." We know Thou hast it in Thy heart to deliver us from evil for Thou didst mount the cross for us; and we know that Thou art able, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

XIII

PLAYING THE GAME

"Train for the religious life."—I TIMOTHY 4: 7. (Moffatt's Translation.)

NO English translation of the Bible can possibly compare with the King James version. It is the fountain of English undefiled, and it is safe to say that nothing will ever supersede it. I wish it might always be used for Scripture reading in the pulpit. There are, however, various other translations in which new light is given upon some particular passage and it is well for the preacher to have these in his study.

In this particular text and context the King James version has it—"Exercise thyself unto godliness for bodily exercise profiteth little" or as the margin has it, "for a little" "but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." St. Paul, the writer of this letter to his son in the Gospel, Timothy, was a man of adventurous spirit. He was not himself an athlete but everything athletic had for him a great charm. From the Acro-Corinthus he had watched the Roman soldiers in their contests and sports; the sturdy gladiators, the fleet runners,—all had a charm for him and he drew from them many of the most telling and thrilling illustrations of Christian life. In his last message to Timothy he used such an illustration, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." He was trying to urge a moral equivalent in the life of young people which would match the heroic

devotions of men on the battlefield, in the arena, and in a marathon race. We talk about the prominence of athletics in college and social life to-day. We marvel that 25,000 or 50,000 people can be gathered to see a ball game or a football eleven or a horse race,—let us remember that these crowds are as nothing to the crowds which the ancients knew. The Circus Maximus accommodated 350,000 people and was crowded to its limits. In Corinth, where Paul spent much time, the Isthmian games were celebrated. These contests were chiefly of the race course, although boxing and other contests were often introduced. These games played an important part in the unity and freedom of Greece. Even their time was reckoned in Olympiads, as the Olympic Games came every fourth year. These games were great national and religious festivals. Physical culture was at the front. Solon made the law six hundred years before Christ that every Greek should learn to swim and read. The Olympic Games continued for twelve hundred years and were in existence three hundred years after the death of Paul. You will understand then, why Paul had so much to say in his letters to Timothy, and to the Corinthians, about " fighting the good fight " and winning a crown.

Life is a great adventure, or, to put it in the phraseology of Paul " it is a great game " and if one is to play the game he must remember the preparation that is necessary and the laws which govern the game. In order to be fitted for such contests Paul reminds Timothy that he must endure " hardness," or hardening, as a good soldier. The tendency of our age is to effeminacy. Men are not willing to pay the price in self-denial and preparation for the great adventure.

In my text the Apostle says: " *Train* for the religious life." Every athlete knows that the secret of success is largely in the training. Lack of training leaves the body

undeveloped. There is nothing pleasing about heat and cold,—the roughness of action which makes robust the body, but every athlete submits to it for the sake of the game. Life is not a thing of velvet cushions and pillows of down. There are hard things to be done, when the frost is in the air, when the snow drifts across the path, or when the sun scorches down and thunderous tempests are on the sea and men pay for victory in sweat and blood.

The Apostle reminds Timothy—"Every man that striveth in the game is temperate in all things"—that does not refer to drink alone but to everything. No excess of food or any indulgence which enervates! The Master taught the same great principle when He said—"If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

It is to the training then that I wish first to call your attention. You must prepare for the game. As I have watched the Giants and the Yankees, seated as close to the dugout as I could get, I have noticed that before every game, they indulge in what might seem to the outsider a very useless exercise. Facing a half dozen players a few feet away, a batter drives the ball into their hands from all angles. They are slow liners and hot liners and grounders; some within easy reach and for others they must jump to the limit. They face all kinds of combinations. When I said to a Giant, "Why aren't you out in the field playing ball?" he said—"This is playing ball. Nothing gives us greater training; speed of action; accuracy of reach and touch." To judge the angle of incidence and co-incidence, to realize the laws of the ricochet—all this is fundamental to the game. What juggling of the ball; what feints and recoveries; what agility and facility!—this is what makes a player for the major leagues. When you come to think of it the same principle applies to all the work into which

you are to enter. There are a few fundamental things that underlie all our achievements.

Has it ever occurred to you that there are only twenty-six letters in the alphabet? They are the signs which little children used to struggle over in the days when they were supposed to learn the alphabet . . . a period now so remote that only the oldest of those who hear me can recall it. Once we used to study spelling.—Nobody studies it any more. I know that because of some of the letters I receive. These twenty-six letters were all the material which the bard of Avon had with which to work and he made out of them his immortal sonnets and fashioned his "Hamlet," and "The Merchant of Venice."—Twenty-six letters for Milton's epic and Bunyan's allegories; for Macauley's histories and Dickens' stories and Browning's poems! Homer had only twenty-four letters, with a rough-breathing thrown in, with which to make his "Iliad" and "Odyssey." So you see the first thing in literature is to master the alphabet. When you have done that everything is easy—that is, comparatively easy. You will remember that Wordsworth once said—"It would not be difficult to write as Shakespeare wrote if one only had the *mind* to do it," and Charles Lamb retorted "It is generally understood that it is only the mind that is necessary."

To press this matter a little further, may I remind you that in mathematics there are but ten numerals. Only ten for addition, multiplication, subtraction and division. You rejoice in the riot of colour in a rose garden or a milliner's shop; but after all, for the shades of silks and flowers, or trees and shrubs, or land and sea and sky, there are only a few primary colours. Newton said there were seven but Helmholtz said they could be reduced to three. When you come to matters of music the same law thrills us—only eight notes, or as some higher critics in music contend

only seven—for song and symphony; for opera and oratorio. These all impress the thought that I am bringing to you, that to fit you for life you need to know its great fundamental symbols and principles. When you enter the first inning in the great game of life it is well to remember how important it really is. In the ninth inning many a man has realized that he lost the game in the first. He would like to wipe out the score against him and begin again, but it is too late. When you enter the game you will want to play a part for which your aptitude fits you; to which your whole nature responds . . . that will play a large part in your success, from the standpoint of natural abilities. It is a sad thing to realize how many things there are in life which are irrevocable. You can do in five minutes, physically, what will blast your life forever; and alas you can sow wild oats enough in fifteen minutes to keep you reaping fifty years.

There are some games where one mistake ruins the game beyond remedy. There are other experiences in life which will make the largest success impossible. If you mar a block of marble you may yet make out of it something worth while but you can never produce the great sculpture which was possible before you marred it. It is because I cannot bear to think of any life as hopeless and because I love to preach the gospel of another chance that I am so anxious that all our young people should be warned before some last fatal move is made.

Long ago Lord Burleigh said: "If, for the sake of a little pleasure, thou doest an evil thing, the pleasure passes and the evil remains to thy torment. If, at the cost of self-denial thou doest a noble thing, the self-denial passes and the reward of it abides forever."

Let me remind you next of the *rules* of the game. Paul said: "If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not

crowned except he strive lawfully." If a game is played without minding the rules, there is no game. If when you are playing golf or roque, you move your ball an inch or a foot to avoid a hazard or gain a point, then there is no more any game. He who lies or cheats forfeits the game in every instance. Only honest adherence to the rules of the game makes it a game, and true sportsmanship is based first of all on absolute honesty.

When two of our college teams were facing each other on the football field, while one of them, with hands over each other's shoulders, were planning new combinations, the others, standing in like manner, were voicing a word of prayer. The critic said—"That is pious nonsense or worse. How foolish to think that two college elevens should be asking the same God to give them the victory and expect their prayer to be answered." But the boys answered—"We are not praying for victory—we are praying for help to play the game; that we may have strength to play it as it should be played; that nothing mean or unsportsmanlike may come into our lives; that we may not take advantage of, or be angered to break, the rules of the game." I do not mean to say that because a man is morally right and sincere he will therefore win a ball game without regard to his ability, but I would like to quote to you the words of Addison:

> *"'Tis not in mortals to command success—*
> *But we'll do more, Sophronius,*
> *We'll deserve it!"*

A wise man has said "It is a matter of comparatively little importance where one fights, so that he fights well and truly,—He may be defeated as the world counts it, but one would rather stand with Socrates than with his judges—with Christ than with Pilate."

"What if you're done to the death, what then?
If you've done the best that you could;
If you've played your part in the world of men
The great Critic will call it good.

"Death comes with a crawl or comes with a pounce;
His step may be slow or spry,
It's not the fact that you're dead that counts,
But only, how did you die?"

Your success in life's great game depends not upon *where*, but *how*, you play.

"Act well your part—there all the honour lies."

Long ago, speaking to the boys of the East Side of New York and urging them to play the game of life to the limit, Theodore Roosevelt said: "Don't flinch; don't foul—hit the line hard." On a tablet at Coney Island they have carved his words—"Aggressive fighting for the right is the greatest sport the world affords."

Many of you whom I am addressing are students. May I remind you that the end of education is not the amassing of facts; it is not the mastering of the intricacies of a language or science,—True education must eventuate in character. If one develops only his intellectual powers with no reference to moral values, he only increases his power for evil. It is only when high ideals are the heart of scholastic training that education becomes the thing it ought to be in preparing one for the great adventure which we call "life." In your training you are to practice self-denial and self-control. You are to pay the price of self-denial in lower things that you may attain to those things which are higher.

Arnold of Rugby was a great teacher, but his power over his boys was in his character. The thing that is remembered of him is not what he taught but the *man* he was,

and by the sheer power of that character he changed the lives of three generations of English youth.

In all this talk to you I am thinking of one Who will help you to do all I am asking of you. It was He, who is Himself the Way and the Truth—who said—" Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." It is the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, felt truth, truth which is translated into life, that alone will save you and make you superior to all the besetments which are about you. Some of you are saying, " I haven't had a fair chance." You talk about heredity and environment and hide behind the disabilities which have come to you through blood or circumstance. Let me remind you—

" Ships sail east and ships sail west
However the wind may blow—
It's the set of the sail and not the gale,
Which tells where the ship will go!"

So I say to you whatever the odds may be, don't flinch, don't quit, play the game by God's help. The strength you develop in these days of preparation will stand you in good stead in the day of battle. It was in Eton and Rugby that England's leaders learned their lesson of devotion.

" The sand of the desert is sodden red—
Red with the wreck of a square that broke—
The gatling's jammed and the colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far and honour a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks—
'Play up! play up! and play the game!' "

If the youth of England and America will put that spirit into the moral and religious contests which are now being waged, victories, unspeakably glorious, will come to the Church of the Living God.

"I have a rendezvous with death," sang Allan Seeger, and in the awful struggle of the World War, the poet met it. After the war was over we changed the challenge until it read, "I have a rendezvous with *life*," and tens of thousands of young people went out with an honest purpose to fight the good fight of faith. In the crusade which the young people are now taking up, they are saying:

"I have a rendezvous with Christ
At some disputed barricade
And I to my pledged word am true
I will not fail that rendezvous."

Let me say with van Dyke:

"Life is an arrow, therefore you must know
What mark to aim at—how to use the bow
Then draw it to the head—and let it go!"

XIV

FAITH AND REASON

"Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good."
—1 THESSALONIANS 5: 21.

THE realm of religion is the realm of the soul's relation to God. Man will never outgrow the need of it. He may try to stifle the cry for it; he may fill his hand and his mind with other concerns; but in the moment when the best within him asserts itself, the cry will be after God, and the voice which has echoed across all the centuries will echo in his own soul: " O that I knew where I might find Him! " What we desire to get is the truth, but, after all, truth is not so much a matter of theory as of life. The only truth worth while is truth that can be felt and truth that can be lived. There are some to whom the truth is a statement to be written out. They say, " Study it, memorize it, and in the great Day of Examination, thou shalt be saved."

There are some to whom truth is a tool, a thing to be used in business, in culture and finance. They say, " Know the truth and it will put money into thy purse." There are those with whom truth is an academic question. They look at it as they would look at a statue. They say, " Learn to enjoy it as a man of culture, and thou shalt be numbered among the elite." There are those who look at truth purely from a philosophical standpoint. Someone has defined metaphysics by saying, " When some man talks about what he does not understand to a lot of people who do not understand *him,* about something that would not

make a particle of difference to any of them if they *did* understand it,—that is metaphysics! "

William James has said, " There is no difference worth discussing which does not make a difference in conduct." The Saviour's attitude toward truth was in the phrase, " This do and thou shalt live." There have been some fine philosophers in the world's history, and little enough did they get out of their philosophy. The Greeks set the world a pace which, considering their pioneer character, the world has never surpassed. There are many subtle teachers of philosophy among the Hindus. They have proven how little value there is in it by the immense difference between their speculation and their ability to work out their speculation in life. Life, after all, is the test which is to prove the value of truth.

A great teacher has said, " No high belief would be possible in a world of utterly mean and selfish men, and no low belief could long maintain itself in a world of practical saints." The deepest things cannot be argued out, they must be seen in life, and then they justify themselves. Even the Beatitudes can never be proved by argument, they are forever false to the Gentiles and forever true to the children of the Kingdom. We may be practical atheists while professing faith in God, and veritable heathen while claiming to be Christians. " The kingdom of truth is inaccessible to all levity and indifference, whether in science or religion." Therefore, let us keep our hearts with all diligence for out of them are the issues of life.

As a boy I remember seeing Bronson Alcott, whom the Transcendentalists of New England held in high esteem. He was a man of philosophical manner of thought and given to the training of young people. He strolled one day into the village school. Some of you will remember it used to be the custom to call upon visitors to make a few

remarks. He stood up and, looking the boys over for some time, at last said abruptly, " What do you come here for? " After they had giggled sufficiently—for they used to do that then just the same as they do now—one of the bolder spirits said: " We come to learn." The philosopher sententiously asked, " To learn *what?* " That started them thinking, and the course of their training filtered through their minds and precipitated in this answer: " To learn to *behave.*" And really, that, after all, was wiser than to have said, " To learn to multiply or to spell." The whole curriculum of life might be condensed into that phrase and the sum total of our studentship might be said to be, " To learn to behave."

This reflection will clarify our minds a little with regard to what religion really is. We have fallen upon times of religious unrest. There is a feeling that about everything, religion as well as science and politics, is in the flux. There is a notion that the old foundations have been swept away. It is a poor year that has not seen the birth of some new religion. There are cults reproducing almost every system of philosophy which went to its grave centuries ago. There is a vague impression among our young people that to be up to the times one must discount pretty nearly everything that the fathers held sacred; that the old creed of father and mother is not up to the requirements of modern society; that the old Bible is not what it was when we were boys and that the old verities have somehow lost their old assurance. I say that there is a sort of *impression* that this is so; rather intangible, to be sure. We are so busy that nobody has time quite to find out about it. We work all day as hard as we can to make both ends meet, and with the hope of keeping our physical machine in order thereby, we play all night, so that there is no time left for calm and deliberate thought. While we are thinking, be-

tween spells, not quite sure that we understand the situation, some man in the sophomoric stage, for that occasionally lasts after a man has left college, and who belongs intellectually to the "newly rich," affirms with much positiveness that he will not participate in any religious exercises which his intelligence does not thoroughly understand and indorse. The man who is not persuaded, takes that as a piece of great intellectual candour and honesty. But every man who has been through that stage and got out of it, knows that it is a case where a little learning has so intoxicated a man that, in the language of the street, he is disposed to "put up a great bluff." Both he and the man to whom he speaks will be wiser after a little.

The greatest philosopher whom America has produced in a hundred years, Professor Borden P. Bowne, has said in his incisive way, "It must not be thought that faith in the Christian view is any more difficult now than it has been in the past. It is only the half educated who fancy that science has made their faith in this matter more difficult. Some persons who have dwelt too long in the cave of dogmatic materialism and who are in the hearsay and uncritical stage of intellect, have been told that belief is unusually difficult to-day. It seems sufficient to tell such persons in reply that they have been misinformed."

In this whole matter of the Christian life and a religion that shall fit modern conditions, we must face the old question of the relation of faith and reason. In our time, the tendency is to look askance at faith as a thing which belonged to the time when men wore knee-buckles and began their Sabbath on Saturday night. It will do us good to see what faith really is. The average man has got into trouble at the point of his faith. He does not know what to think with regard to religious matters as they used to be presented. He has heard somewhere that they have got

new light from the monuments of the East, but he does not quite know what kind of light it is.

He read in the paper last week that Professor Kyle and his associates have discovered the city where Abraham and Lot used to live and he wants to know what happened to Lot's wife at Sodom. . . . He has heard that they have gotten hold of writings of the time of Hammurabi. But Hammurabi may have been a blacksmith or a priest for all he knows. He has heard that there are disturbances in theological thought, but he does not know which is the right wing and which is the left.

Then there is the man in the church who is in a chronic state of alarm. He is afraid of new theology, and psychology, and higher criticism, and English agnosticism, and German philosophy. He is afraid that something will happen to the old Ark. He is getting pessimistic of his times, and all the religion he has gives him little comfort for fear he will have to lose it sooner or later.

To that man I wish to say that he need not be in the least degree alarmed, that after all that science has said, there were never so many scientists who were firm believers in the Christian life as now; that after all that has been said about literary criticism of the Word of God, there were never so many college professors and college students who humbly believed the Word of God as now. So that he need not have the least concern about the old Ark. It is quite able to take care of itself. The latest survey shows that more than half of the adult population of the entire country are actually enrolled as members of the Christian Church, and there are nine churches for every ten public schools throughout the country.

The case for faith needs to be thoroughly investigated. There was something so valuable in faith that Jesus was all the time speaking of it. He began His ministry by ask-

ing men to believe. And He ended His ministry, in the Upper Room, by ringing the changes upon that same word —"Ye believe in God, believe also in me." He said it was faith which made His miracles possible and faith was the thing that He all the time commended in those who appealed to Him. The apostles caught that same thought and were evermore presenting it. The keynote of the New Testament is, "The just shall live by faith." "We walk by faith, not by sight." And in that wonderful Hall of Fame which is opened in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, it is shown that everything worth while had been done by faith. But this ought to be said, that the New Testament nowhere opposes faith to reason.

"A haze on the far horizon,
The infinite tender sky;
The ripe, rich tint of the corn fields,
And the wild geese sailing high;

"And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the goldenrod;
Some of us call it Autumn
And others call it God."

It has been quite the fashion to affirm that faith and reason are opposed to each other. But, as one of our brightest minds has said, "Faith is no more opposed to reason than it is opposed to any other faculty of the mind. Faith is not the antithesis of reason or memory or imagination." It is only the antithesis of sight. All men who walk to any purpose, walk, not by sight but by faith. There is nothing mysterious about faith. It is the principle which underlies all life. We sometimes appear to think that faith in *religion* is different from faith in business, but Babson says it isn't; it is the same thing. I have faith in a man. I trust him. I loan him money. I do business

with him. Over every business venture, the motto of the New Testament is written: "According to your faith be it unto you! " You do business by faith. You buy real estate; you venture on any invention or experiment by faith. But let me say that the Bible nowhere intimates that thought and reason are to be stultified. We are to love God with all the *mind,* as well as all the heart.

In my text, the Apostle exhorts every Christian to " prove," or test, " all things " and to " hold fast to that which is good." He wants us to use all the faculties we have. We are to try all the spirits. Religion is founded on reason as well as on faith. If the Church stands up now or at any time and says to people, " You must not reason about the Word of God, you must not reason about the value of the Christian life," she stultifies herself and lays the foundation for her own overthrow. In the Old Testament the challenge rings out, " Come now," saith the Lord, " let us *reason* together."

The questions which are presented on every side are questions which the reason must measure. With all the light that is beating on the Word of God, do you suppose that any book in it could have stood until now if it had not been buttressed by reason? Read the history of the Christian Church and see how it has reasoned its way up out of the darkness of earlier years. You do not charge it against the astronomy of to-day that the pioneers in that realm thought the stars were only points of light and that this world was the center of the universe. You do not charge it against the geology of to-day that its pioneers thought the shells that appeared on the mountains dropped from the sky. You do not charge it against medicine that its pioneers made their remedies out of snake-skins.

While the human reason has a lofty place in the Council Chamber of the faculties of the soul, we should bear in

mind, as Dr. Jefferson says, that " it has its limitations and that what passes for reason with many men is often something else." Often a man affirms that his reason moves him, when it is only his opinion or prejudice. Reason is with most men a matter of experience. To have said, within your memory and mine, that a man could talk so his voice could be heard a thousand miles, would have been as unreasonable as to say that two times two are six. And to say that the time would come when men could send a message through the air without any wire whatever, as I am doing now, would have been more wonderful still. And to have said that we could talk under the sea with the nations of Europe, Asia and Africa, would have shown that we had no reasoning faculty whatever.

Religion lays hold of all parts of our natures. As we must work as well as eat, so the Christian must think and feel and work. What right has a man to say to me, " I do not believe in the fragrance of flowers," when he will not smell them? What right has he to say, " I do not love music " when he will not listen? We are to " prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good." It is ordinary intellectual honesty to give unbiased attention to facts in question. It is the pragmatic test that counts.

When a man is troubled in his soul, feels that the great verities are slipping away from him, feels wearied and heavy laden; that his soul has gone lame and that his conscience has become dulled; that his moral vigour is oozing out; the only thing for him to do is to make the supreme test of that challenge which Jesus gives, " Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest! "

There are modern conditions which we must face. Each age has its own problems and we must settle ours. There are great principles which never change.

"When the anchors that faith has cast
Are dragging in the gale,
I am quietly holding fast
To the things that cannot fail.

"In the darkest night of the year
When the stars have all gone out,
Courage is better than fear,
And faith is truer than doubt.

"And fierce though the fiends may fight,
And long though the angels hide,
I know that truth and right
Have the universe on their side."

The yearning of the heart after God is the same in the streets of New York that it was in the hanging gardens of Babylon, in the shadow of the pyramids in Egypt, or in the groves where Socrates taught in Athens.

Faith and reason are not enemies but friends. Each must supplement the other and it is true now, as it always has been, and always will be, that "if any man will do the will of God," he shall know the truth. This is the religion of Jesus, the religion of the ancient man and the modern man—and besides this there is no other.

XV

IN THE DAY OF THE EAST WIND

"He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind."
—ISAIAH 27: 8.

THIS is a poetical text about an unpoetical matter. What great men those old Hebrew prophets were! They thought in pictures. They personified sun, moon and stars, seas and rivers and trees. No imagery of Milton, or Wordsworth, or Tennyson, or Browning, can match the spiritual imagery of the Old Testament. Jotham's parable, David's psalms, Habakkuk's prayer, are matchless in their spiritual poetry and teaching. The true poet is ever the child of nature and gets his lesson at first hand from the heart of God. Isaiah is to me the most regal of the prophets. He speaks like a man who had seen the King in His beauty and never forgot the vision. He bore a testimony through a long ministry, as unremitting as it was brilliant, to the undeviating supremacy of the unseen forces that shape history and of the quiet strength which comes to the individual heart through confidence in God. The Book of Isaiah is full of fine poetry. Whether he describes the mighty roar of the sea or speaks of Him who cometh with "dyed garments from Bozrah mighty to save," or sings a pastoral song under the glinting leaves of the vineyard, in each place he is equally at home.

In the day of the East Wind! There seems to be one wind that nobody likes. In the Orient or the Occident, by the sea or the desert or mountain, the men of ancient

and of modern times all agree in one thing, they do not like the East Wind. The only time when the Calvinist of New England talks about falling from grace is when the East Wind blows. The only time when the average New Yorker becomes a pessimist is when the East Wind drives its misty flocks across Staten Island from Kill von Kull to Spuyten Duyvil and wraps skyscraper and pedestrian alike in blinding mist. Perhaps no other meteorological fact plays such havoc with human dispositions as does the East Wind. When a man goes out in the morning with a gruff and ugly look and forgets to say "good-bye" to his wife; and when the children look questioningly into her face to know the reason of such strange and ill-tempered action, the mother quietly says, "It is the East Wind," and turns as complacently as she can to the duties of the day. When the mother herself is impatient and petulant, and when the tender solicitude which otherwise never fails seems to be at an end, the children get together on the front stoop or in the street and say, "It is the East Wind." When there is a deflection from the normal in parent, or teacher, or preacher, or friend, or lover, it is always best to say, "It is the East Wind."

I found the Arab on the slopes of Lebanon, and the Jew in the streets of Jerusalem unhappy when it came. The Italian in his olive groves, the Highlander among his sheep, the Crofter on the Emerald Isle, all sniff the air and shrug the shoulder and say, "It is the East Wind!" From the days of Izaak Walton the East Wind has kept every fisherman by the sea and by the lake with empty creel and heavy heart, and he has condensed his experience in one hopeless dictum:

"When the wind is in the east,
'Tis neither good for man nor beast!"

So it has come to pass that the East Wind stands in human life for the uncomfortable and the unfruitful and the unhappy.

The North Wind has challenge and vigour in it; the South Wind brings balm and perfume and rest; the West Wind is best of all. It sends ships to sea, carrying a bone in their teeth, and it brings them to harbour with quick and steady pull. It sweeps away the clouds, it brings sunlight and cheer and helps to paint the cheek of the lily and the peach.

But the East Wind is the wind of darkness and clouds and aching bones and querulous temper. The sick grow sicker, the nervous more fretful, and despondency takes on a deeper shade of indigo. If there is any time when a man needs comfort and hope and courage, it is in the day of the East Wind. Every man and every woman has times when the wind is in the East and when each sings with Longfellow:

"My life is cold, and dark, and dreary,
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary."

It must have been the East Wind of which the poet was thinking when he sang:

"The chambers of the great are jails,
And head winds right for royal sails."

What a chapter could be written on jails as palaces, and prisoners as victors. To write that chapter you would have to tell the story of Joseph and Moses, of Paul and Socrates and Galileo. You must tell how Bunyan, prisoned of God and men, had the Delectable Mountains spread out before

him and the angels of God singing lauds for him in his narrow cell, so that neither the waters of the River Ouse beating against his prison wall, nor the challenge of the surly warden could disturb or affright his heart. After twelve years of prison and a brief release, he could go back to Bedford Jail with a joyous heart, saying, "I was had home to Prison."

And what another chapter could be written of the prisoners of pain! That would tell of Milton, poor and blind; of Byron and his club foot; of DeQuincy and his opium habit; of Robert Hall and his spinal trouble; of Channing "the partner of pain"; of Alexander Stevens in his wheel chair; of Robert L. Stevenson, marshalling his characters in the "Land of Counterpane" and writing, sitting up in his bed, until he dies in far off Samoa.

So if you are a prisoner of pain or longing or failure, do not imagine that you are afflicted worse than other people. That great editor, W. Robertson Nicoll, of England says, "Who can doubt but that the vast majority are more or less disappointed." He quotes Robert Herrick:

"More discontents I never had
Since I was born, than here;
Where I have been, and still am sad,
In this dull Devonshire."

He reminds us that Moses *sees* the Promised Land but never *enters* it.

"Every heart hath its own bitterness," as every life has its "Forest of Arden," where all things turn "as you like it." As each life has its Vale of Tempe, where the bees cull from the flowers and the honey of Hymettus flows, so every life has its leafless forests through which the East Wind blows and through whose bare boughs the sad night rains drip.

Now it is a comfort in all this to know that it is appointed. Not appointed unto us by some Supreme Being as a punishment, and not appointed unto us because of some fault of heredity or environment; but appointed unto us in the nature of things, in the course of events, and because it is really best for us. All this does not rush upon us, in the main, unexpectedly, and it will not in the end be fruitless. As there are four seasons in the year and each has its place, so there are four great points of the compass in God's Heavens and the winds of His grace blow from each one.

"And blow it east or blow it west
The wind that blows—that wind is best."

I am sure there are many of us who feel that we are passing now through " the day of the East Wind." Some of you are feeling it financially. A year ago you were thrilling with dreams of affluence and your pulse beat high; like the stock exchange. Now things have changed. The pendulum has swung the other way. Perhaps you are saying it has been the hardest year of your business life. You may have had less work and less pay. There is least in the financial outlook to give you cheer. Crops are poor and cotton is a failure. If you are a man of business, trade has been slow and collections poor. If you are a clerk in store or factory, or labouring anywhere, there has been less chance to work and less money in the pay envelope. Many of you have seen your bank account growing less, and some of you were long ago at the end of it. You have seen stocks depreciate and their income dissipated into thin air. The man in whom you trusted betrayed your confidence. The bank where your funds were placed has closed its doors, and altogether it has been a year of the East Wind financially.

With some of you, it has been a year of the East Wind in your homes. There has been sickness, a failure of great hopes. You have grown discouraged, the pressure upon your purse and the pressure upon your nerves, and the pressure upon your strength, has been greater than you could bear. There have been some of you who have found it not only a time when the clouds were in the air but the rough winds have swept down upon you. They have torn up great trees by the root and perhaps they swept in at the nursery door and the crib is empty! Like the stormy chapter which closed Elijah's experience, you have passed down to the Jordan and as you walked and talked with your beloved, there appeared the chariot of fire and parted you asunder and in a storm of tears they went home to God. Ah, if you could only realize that in the falling of their mantle upon your shoulders, and in the gift of a double portion of their spirit, they are still living *in* you and *through* you!—if you could only realize that, it would sanctify the day of the East Wind.

And that leads me to say that the East Wind has a deeper significance in life than we sometimes think. As we look at national life, we see this great fact standing out most impressively. There are nations which are located on balmy shores. The year is one long delightful, dreamy season. Where the palm nods to the lotus and it seems always afternoon. In the far-off Pacific Seas the islands are lapped by waters which are the homes of finny tribes. On the shores the fruits of the tropics are to be had for the taking. There is almost no effort required and no care for the morrow. For countless ages men have lived there, but what has happened to them? They have lost their energy, lost their virtue, lost their power. They have no art, no literature, no commerce, no men of high virtue or commanding power, save as the Gospel may of late have

brought such to them. If some tidal wave should sweep over those seas and engulf every island it would be of little account to the history of the world. But compare those lands of the South with the lands of the East Wind, with Scotland, or England, or our own northern coasts. Here amid the frost of the winter and the surging seas, with the East Wind blowing upon us by day and by night, with a rocky and dangerous coast, with food given up grudgingly by the sea, or wrested by heavy toil from the unwilling soil, we have made a record that will never be erased as long as history endures. Great poets " have taught in song what they learned in pain." The tense muscles, wrought to perfection in the strain of life, have laid hold of this old sodden world to lift it up to God!

What love of liberty has been born in the East Wind! What contributions made to the growth of civilization! What martyr blood has been shed, and how in every land the children of the storm have proven themselves the benefactors of the world! You need not pity that nation that lies in the zone of the East Wind. It has its hand on the moulding forces of the world and its grip upon the tiller of the Ship of State.

May I remind you that the same fact which you see in nations is also true in individual life. There are countless thousands of men who seem never to have had a blast of the East Wind. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart can wish. They have been sheltered against all storm and grown under glass. But what of it all? If they were swept off the face of the earth, no good cause would be pauperized, no helpful agency would have lost any support, no community would have been made poor. They have been cumberers of the ground; they have received much, but they gave out little or nothing. They are the children of opulence, of indolence, of selfishness.

But who are these whom the world will not willingly let go? Their names are written in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and in every other chapter which glorifies the record of heroic and self-denying lives. They come from dungeons dark and cities full and deserts drear. They were nourished amid the snows of blinding blasts. The waters of a bitter life were poured out to them and they drank the cup to its dregs. They were environed by rocks and grew up amid storm and opposition, but they thrust their roots deep into the soil and the very rocks which opposed them have become their anchor as they lift their heads against the East Wind.

Many a man has found that his trials were the making of him. "Before I was afflicted, I went astray," says the Psalmist, "but now have I kept thy law." As the East Wind is necessary in the economy of God's physical universe, so the experience of the ages has proven that the time of trial or stress of weather and earthly disappointments has been, for most people, the period of their greatest spiritual development. As a nation, our financial panics have been marked by spiritual return to God. This was so in '37, '57, '73 and in the '90's; may we find it true in our own history in these passing years! Personally, in the midst of pain and sickness, we learn patience. Once Ignatius was asked by one of his followers what was the shortest and surest way of attaining the perfect life of Christ and its rewards. He said, "Many sorrows borne for His love."

God's great winds which sweep down upon us should be first the winds of purification, and when they sob themselves to sleep there should be a man left marked by purity of life, by moral health, by reality of soul and purpose, a man from whom all that is mean and unworthy and sensual shall have been separated, a man after God's own

heart. We may well realize that the love which stopped not at the cross is in tenderest sympathy with our burdens and the wind which sweeps away the chaff, and almost takes our breath, is freighted with an infinite sigh of pity.

"Speak ye comfortably unto Zion" is the call which I am glad to obey. How merciful God has always been to the tried and the tempted! I should like to comfort every heart who believes himself in the day of the East Wind by the sweet reflection that God will remember you and keep you in times of distress and bring you forth into a larger and more useful life. Do not become discouraged. You cannot tell what morning the wind will blow from the West and all your clouds be scattered.

"One by one thy griefs shall meet thee,
Do not fear an armèd band;
One will fade as others reach thee,
Shadows passing through the land.

"Do not look at life's long sorrow;
See how small each moment's pain;
God will help thee for to-morrow,
Every day begin again."

So when the day of the East Wind comes always remember that it is still God's wind, just as truly from the East as when it blows from the West, and it may be quite as fruitful. Let us stay our hearts by faith upon Him, "until the day break, and the shadows flee away."

XVI

ROBBING GOD

"Will a man rob God?"—MALACHI 3: 8.

THIS is one of several unanswered questions in the Bible. Jesus says, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" St. Paul asks, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Peter cries out, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" The prophet Malachi exclaims, "But who may abide the day of his coming and who shall stand when he appeareth?" There are other unanswered questions in the Book, the statement of which ought to strike the simple solemn.

Will a man rob God? Who are the parties to this query? Man and God. Man is wonderfully created and marvelously adapted. Of all the inventions which have been devised, none can equal the human hand. Sir Charles Bell calls it "the conservation of all perfection as an instrument." Of all the optical instruments which science has developed, nothing can match the perfection of the eye. The human ear is simply marvelous in its construction and adaptation. The radio itself is not so great a wonder. If man is marvelously created, his creation is matched by the wonderful material which God has contributed for his well-being. He has adapted the air to be breathed by man so that it cleanses his vitiated blood. He might have made it so that every inhalation would have produced pain; instead of that, it is not only voluntary

but it is accompanied by a great sense of satisfaction. The sounds of nature might have so jarred upon the delicate tympanum as to have made music itself an infliction, but the notes of the birds and the songs of men and a thousand melodies which surround us minister to our joy. The eye might have shrunk from the light, as it does when it is diseased, and light might have brought with every gleam a shock of pain; instead of that, we revel in it.

God gives all His forces to our aid without stint. We start a rock upon the mountainside, but gravitation puts its shoulder under it and multiplies its speed a thousand times. We launch our ships upon the seas and He sends the winds to push them on their way. He unlocks the prisoned sunshine of past millenniums fastened for ages in the black coal, and steam is generated from it, which moves the giant screws and throws the steamer onward through the billows. A piece of dull zinc lies helpless and alone, but He shows us how to burn it up—not with fire, but with acid, and out of the conflagration comes electricity. We speak into the ear of the telephone, and it sends our message on the copper hoofs of lightning over the land and under the sea, and the radio makes the trackless air the megaphone of the nation. All this and a thousand times more He does to make human life a thing of joy and comfort.

Man is weak. Perhaps no offspring of any animal is more helpless than he, but God prepares the strong arm of a father and the tender heart of a mother to care for the baby. They stand over him and toil and sweat and suffer unspeakable burdens to train the little voyager from an unknown shore until he shall be fitted to be in touch with the new world to which he has come. And little by little He reveals to the child that he not only looks like his human father but that he is made in the image of Him who has

created him. There is no likeness between the carpenter and his product; no likeness between the machinist and his machine; but because men are the children of God, therefore, the Bible says, they bear His image. And God treats man as a father would treat a child. He never punishes like a tyrant or a master, but He says, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort thee." Man breaks His commandments, but instead of smiting him with the thunder bolts of His power, God says, " Come now, let us reason together." Man loses health and wealth and friends because of his sins, but God still yearns over him and cries with tears in His voice, " How can I give thee up." God watches him when every other eye is closed. He guides him when other arms drop helpless. He speaks comfortably to him when everybody curses him; and at last when his father and mother have forsaken him, the Lord takes him up.

Now, the question is, will such a man rob such a God! Of course he will not. A man may be mean but he is not mean enough for that. He has received all those unnumbered mercies with a tenderness that knows no match and a persistency that passes seventy times seven, and with love that never faileth. There is nothing we hate worse than ingratitude. We shall never cease to condemn those Puritans who sold the son of their Indian friend to be a captive and a slave. To-day you cannot get the meanest Arab to hurt or rob a man with whom he has broken a crust or eaten salt. I sat down in an Arab's tent with glowering eyes and muttered curses all about me, but when the Sheik had eaten salt with me, my enemies were silent. And yet we are asked whether one who has eaten from another's table all his life, who never slept on a couch that the other had not spread, who never wore a garment the other did not weave, who never drew a breath that the

other did not supply the strength to do it—we are asked if the recipient of all that will rob the One who gave it.

History has some examples of perfidy which bring a blush of shame to our cheek, but nothing anywhere compares with that of man to his God. He has asked Him to spare his life and when He has done so, he has cursed Him to His face. He has asked Him for the richest gifts and spent them in fighting Him, and he has so hated the name and character of his Benefactor that thousands of crosses are set up in this city to-day for the crucifixion of his own Brother, God's well beloved Son. Of course we do not crucify Him in the same way that He was crucified two thousand years ago, but we do it quite as effectively. Let me recall to you the stirring words of the late G. Studdert-Kennedy, the wonderful Chaplain of the British forces in the World War:

"When Jesus came to Golgotha they hanged Him on a tree,
They drove great nails through hands and feet, and made a Calvary;
They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red were His wounds and deep,
For those were crude and cruel days, and human flesh was cheap.

"When Jesus came to Birmingham they simply passed Him by,
They never hurt a hair of Him, they simply let Him die;
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give Him pain,
They only just passed down the street, and left Him in the rain.

"Still Jesus said, 'Forgive them for they know not what they do,'
And still it rained the winter rain that drenched Him through and through;
The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against a wall and cried for Calvary."

But with all his opposition to God, what gain can come to man? Listen: Can a man rob God by force? The God

that holds the seas in the hollow of His hands, who scatters the Armada in a day and whose earthquakes shake the world? How will a man come out who rushes in his impotence against the thick bosses of the shield of the Almighty? How do you think a man will come out who is trying to rob God by force?

Can a man rob Him by stealth? How could one ever hope to escape detection? Men sleep; God never; darkness and light are alike to Him. We can deceive men, we can bear false witness, we can suborn juries, but God cannot be deceived. What use is it to lie, when He knows?

Again, who would think of stealing openly from the judge who was to try his case? It would certainly seem that since we derive our existence from Him who is our Benefactor and can cut us off at any moment, it would be the height of madness to seek to rob Him. Even Israel with all its hardness of heart and its years of wanderings, when it remembered Egypt and the Red Sea and the deliverances of a thousand years, was ashamed and was fain to cry "Wherein have we robbed thee?" "In tithes and offerings," is the answer. Now this is often used to emphasize the need we have to make our gifts of substance to God, but a greater question than that is on my heart. God does not need your money. He made the gold and the silver Himself and what is the little you hold in your hand in comparison with the riches which He Himself has hidden in the heart of the earth and which in any moment with one fulminating stroke He could throw into the sunlight? What did He need of a few calves and a few lambs and a few turtle doves? What necessity had He for a few measures of wheat and barley and bunches of grapes and baskets of figs? His were the cattle of a thousand hills. It was His own hand that set every blossom and His own will that brought the blossom to fruit, and His sunlight and

His rain that made the purple vintage of the vineyard and the mellow beauty of the fig and olive.

"Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
And back of the flour is the mill;
And back of the mill is the wheat and the shower,
And the sun, and the Father's will."

The meaning of Israel's gift was to be found in its love and devotion and gratitude. The Bible shows us how the Jews of that time gave two-tenths of their income to the Lord and as long as they pursued what the world would call a ruinous policy, no nation stood before them, but when they tried to cheat God, it turned out, as it turns out now, leanness entered into their souls.

Are you saying, "Wherein have I robbed God?" You have stolen what was His. It is His call, "My son, give me thy heart." We have answered, "Soul, take thine ease; eat, drink and be merry," but God is saying, "It is time to seek the Lord." We say, "Go Thy way for this time. When I have a convenient season I will call for Thee." God says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve;" but man says, "I will love self and pleasure and these will I serve." You have robbed Him of your time, of your talents, of your love. God wants what you want—*love*. What does a husband or a wife or a mother or a brother or a sister want most? What avails it if we have every comfort in life if we do not have love? A loveless heart is a pauper, no matter what else it has. What we need in our homes is not so much better furniture, or larger rooms, or finer food. What we want is love. What does a wife care for the elegance of her home, so long as she has no love from her husband? What does she care about sealskin coats and diamonds if she knows that his heart is not with her?

Mother, you know what you want—it is the love of your daughter. Happy the woman who has her own daughter for a comrade and friend! Unspeakable agonies for her who sees her daughter drift away from her, cold and careless in the home, indifferent to her mother's caresses. Happy the father who is the chum and pal of his son. Gnawed at by a serpent's tooth is the heart where ingratitude has made the son a stranger and an alien to his father.

Love is what *we* must have, and it is what *God* wants! It is love which makes sacrifice easy. It is love which makes life new.

In one of the strongest works of fiction, written by a woman of Wesleyan training, the story is told of a woman of fashion, essentially kind of heart, but caring little for the higher verities. This woman falls in love with one who would fain become an atheist. He tries to persuade himself that there is no God, no soul, no future life, and she is all too willing for the love she bears him to give ready assent to all his skepticism, and is quite as avowed in her infidelity as is he. After a while a little life that has grown up to boyhood trembles in the balance, and at last slips away from them to the land o' the leal. In the presence of the still little face, the father's skepticism goes like the mist before the morning sun. Turning to his wife, he says, "I have got to begin life over again so as to go the way Willie went. The little chap made me promise to meet him in the 'country over the hills,' as he called it, and I have never broken a promise to Willie and never will. It will be difficult for us, I know, but God will help us."

The wife looked at him with sad, despairing eyes, and said: "There is no God; you have often told me so."

"I know I have, that was when I was blind. There is a God and you and I must serve Him together."

"How can we serve a myth?" said the mother.

"He is not a myth," said the father. "I lied to you when I told you so."

Then the mother laughed—a laugh that was not pleasant to hear. "Do you think you can play pitch and toss with a woman's soul in that way? Well, you cannot. When I met you I believed in God, but you laughed me out of my faith. It is too late to undo your work. Do not try to comfort me, even if you can drug yourself with fairy tales about meeting Willie again. I shall never see my little child again in this life and there is no other. You took my faith away from me, but it does not follow that you can give it back. It is gone forever."

"No," said the father, "it will come back and you will believe as I do."

"Never—it is too late. You have taken away my Lord and I know not where you have laid Him, and however long I may live, I shall never find Him again."

But John Masefield, the new Poet Laureate of England, tells quite another story of the transforming power of a new affection. You will find it in his book "The Everlasting Mercy." Be sure to read it. He tells the story of the wastrel of the village, deep in his cups, but stirred by the message of a sweet Quaker woman he gives his heart to God, and this is the way he tells the story of how the miracle of miracles took place:

"I did not think, I did not strive,
The deep peace burnt my me alive;
The bolted door had broken in,
I knew that I had done with sin.
I knew that Christ had given me birth
To brother all the souls of earth,
And every bird and every beast
Should share the crumbs broke at the feast.
O glory of the lighted mind.
How dead I'd been, how dumb, how blind!

Out of the mist into the light
O blessed gift of inner sight!''

Though he keeps on at his old task in the field, all his life is changed.

''That Christ was standing there with me,
That Christ had taught me what to be,
That I should plough, and as I ploughed
My Saviour Christ would sing aloud,
And as I drove the clods apart
Christ would be ploughing in my heart.''

Masefield himself had experienced that of which he sings and I am asking everyone who has turned away from Him, whose we are and whom we ought to serve, to come back to Him, for it is in Him we live and move and have our being. It is from Him that cometh every good and perfect gift and we can never be truly happy away from Him. How *can* a man rob God!

XVII

WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS?

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."
—ROMANS 12: 11.

A VERY good comment on this text from the King James' Version is Moffatt's translation of the same, which runs this way: "Never let your zeal flag; maintain the spiritual glow; serve the Lord."

I am not interested especially to-day to look in the directory and find out how many of you are storekeepers, or manufacturers, or planters or miners. If you have a union card, it would appear from that whether you are painters or plumbers, tailors or carpenters. These distinctions may be, in the last analysis, quite fictitious. I should like to know what is your *real* business.

What a diversity of occupations there is! One man is a lawyer, another is a lacemaker; one is a physician, another is a plumber. We have brokers and barbers, electricians and elocutionists, teachers and tailors. How do you suppose men ever came to take up such diversified occupations? I hear some of you say, "Because it was necessary." Necessary for what, and for whom? Well, first comes a question of aptitude. One man is an artist. Form and colour appeal to him. Here is another man who is colour-blind. Here is a man who is a musician, but here is another, like General Grant, who said he knew only two tunes—"One was 'Yankee Doodle' and the other wasn't." Dean Stanley said that the only music he really cared for was a bass drum solo. It is highly important that a man

should do the work for which he is fitted. It would not do to take a man who is colour-blind and make him an engineer on a railroad train where he might confuse the signals for danger and safety. General Grant or Dean Stanley could not, with propriety, lead an orchestra. They would not know when it was in time or in tune. The fact of fitness is also applicable in other directions. Here is a man who is a clerk, bound to a desk or an office chair, but his heart is in God's great out-of-doors. He is a lover of flowers. He ought to have been a botanist or a florist. He is out of his element in the office; his heart is not in his work. Longfellow sang in " The Building of the Ship ":

> *" The merchant's word*
> *Delighted the Master heard,*
> *For his heart was in his work, and the heart*
> *Giveth grace unto every art."*

The clerk goes to his daily work like a quarry slave scourged to a task in which he has no joy.

Another occasion for the diversity of business is human need. If all were farmers, then there would be no masons or carpenters or plumbers. The barber is not supposed to have as much salary or have as large financial holdings as a broker, but it may be that the barber is quite as important for the well-being of the community as the broker. We are here to serve humanity. You had fish on your table for breakfast. How did you get them? You bought them in the market, but there is a widow in Marblehead whose husband's fishing dory faded into the mist off the George's banks and he was never seen again, and she is saying as she passes the fish market, " They are dear fish to me! " You would not like to sweep the streets or drive an ashcart, but somebody must do it, or speedily the city would not be a safe place in which to live.

You sat a few weeks ago in the gilded salon of an ocean liner, or stretched at your ease in a steamer chair on the deck and congratulated yourself on your good fortune, and your cheeks reddened in the salt breeze of the sea. But there are men down in the hot heart of the ship, stripped to the waist, shoveling coal into the roaring mouth of the furnaces which furnish the steam to drive your ship across the sea. The strain on that stoker is so fearful that he can stand it for only a few minutes at a time. You are his debtor for every revolution of the wheel.

While we enjoy the even heat of our homes and gain it by pushing a button, somebody far underneath the earth is digging coal to make the heat possible. So we have to remember that we are members one of another, and are in debt to the toiler as well as the thinker.

"Honour and fame from no condition rise;
Act well your part, there all the honour lies!"

"When Adam delved and Eva span
Who was then the gentleman?"

The man who shaves notes may look down on the man who shaves faces, but the barber may be the better man of the two. In lands across the sea, men may be knighted for success in trade.

"A king may make a belted knight,
But an honest man's above his might."

Bobby Burns was right when he said it.

So it seems that we have to divide among us the occupations which are necessary for the well-being of society. Possibly we cannot all have the one we should like best, or if we have one that pleases us, we must remember that we cannot expend our energy and time and take its emolument wholly for ourselves. We are here not to be min-

istered unto but to minister. The motto of the Prince of Wales is, "I serve," and a far greater than he left this message with His disciples—"I am among you as one that serveth."

One of our enterprising newspapers sent out a questionnaire in which people were asked to state who was the greatest man in the world in the last generation. Of course, opinions differed greatly, and scores of names were propounded for that high position; but with all this difference of opinion one thing was of special interest, namely, that the basis upon which the claim of greatness was made was, in every case, that this particular man had been of greatest service to the world in his day and generation.

Let me ask again my question—What is your business? We have two words that differ widely in meaning, although there is only one letter changed in the spelling. We speak of a man's *vocation*. What do we mean by that? Your Latin student will tell you that the root of the word means calling. Called of whom? Well, when you consider his aptitudes, and his surroundings, why not say, he is called of God? He is supposed to be doing that thing for which he was especially fitted by nature, and so ought to offer greatest return for his work in the service of the world.

We have another word which some have thought was almost synonymous with the first. That word, differing only in one letter, is *avocation*. If you will look it up in the dictionary you will find it means distraction or minor occupation. Now with these two words before us, it is important for you to decide which of the things in which you busy yourself is your *vocation* and which your *avocation*. If vocation is your real calling and avocation simply an interference with your vocation, then I have something to say which ought to have deep meaning in it.

The Bible has a great deal to say about callings. It says

God called David from the sheepfold to be King, He called Isaiah and Jeremiah and Amos to be prophets. When Jesus walked the shingly beach of Galilee, He said to Peter and James and John, "Leave your nets and follow me." But they were plying their calling—they were fishermen. Jesus said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men, instead of fishermen." He thus indicated to them that their fishing was only an avocation; that He had come to induct them into their real vocation. He had called them to be His followers.

There is an old phrase out of the distant past which has deeper meaning in it than we sometimes think. Thomas Carlyle said: "The older I grow, and I now stand on the verge of eternity, the more there comes back to me the question which I learned in the catechism as a little child." "What is the chief end of man? To serve God here and to enjoy Him forever." Now when you think of the sweep of a measureless life, limitless in purpose and extent, would it not seem a perversion of values to call life's *business* a thing which could be finished in a score or two of years? How all that is changed if we feel that the real business of life is not to make a fortune to be left behind us, but to grow a character that we can take with us, and that is good enough to last forever.

Now, if it is true that we are face to face with one great overarching fact, namely, that it is every man's supreme business to serve God, and so to serve his fellowman, this fact to which I am calling your attention is of thrilling significance. If you wish to become a lawyer or a physician or a musician or a sculptor, you practice law, or you practice medicine, or you practice music, or art. You give yourself to these things and the measure of your devotion is the measure of your success. If a man wants to be an adept at the piano, he knows the price of that will be prac-

tice. It was a great tribute to his art and to the judgment of the people that before Paderewski would come back from his political life to take up the instrument of which he was the master, he spent a whole year in most exacting toil, to the limit of his time and ability, that he might once more become the master of the piano as he was in the earlier days. It would seem, then, that if men wished to develop those things which were supreme, it would be necessary to practice the presence of God. When you go to your office, or your bank, or your store, or your factory, never forget that the work in any of them will soon be over, somebody else's name will be over the door and you will have passed from that avocation into your permanent occupation. Many a man will be forced to say at the last, "Had I but served God and humanity with the zeal with which I served myself in store and field and factory, I should have had infinite treasure to show for it, where now I am a pauper." Men know that to succeed even in this world, men must pay the price in toil and sweat. No man becomes a scholar or a saint in his sleep. These are times when the nerve of endeavour for all great things seems, with many, to have been cut. There is a jaded skepticism which bankrupts holy purposes and leaves men sodden with selfish ease. They will not make life's great adventure.

Horton of England has an allegory on Modern Progress which runs something like this:

The Spirit of Modern Progress called one day upon a Human Being and said to him:

"I perceive you are discontented with your life. You long for things which are beyond your power. Tell me what will make you happy and I will give it to you."

The Human Being replied, "If you have such wonderful power at your command, then make my life more comfortable. I am weary of it."

" You ask what is easy," replied the Spirit, and thereupon he gave the Human Being beautiful cities, with streets that were sometimes clean, and police departments that were sometimes efficient. He gave him handsome houses and a thousand other things to make life comfortable.

" Now," said the Spirit, " do you wish for anything more? "

" I wish," replied the Human Being, " that my business life were more comfortable."

" That, too, is easy," answered the Spirit, and he gave him telephone and telegraph and railroads and steamships.

" Do you still desire more? " asked the Spirit, and the Man answered, " Yes, make my religion more comfortable."

" That is simplicity itself," answered the Spirit, and thereupon he gave him magnificent churches, fine music, trained preachers and ten-minute sermonettes. " Now," said the Spirit, " are you satisfied at last? "

The Human Being answered, " My conscience troubles me. Make that comfortable."

" That is the easiest thing of all," said the Spirit, and thereupon he did away with the personal devil and gave the Human Being an easy-going summer, and a hell that made a comfortable winter resort. At that the Human Being fell back into his easy-chair and remarked: " Really, my dear Spirit, you have made religion so comfortable that I shall hardly need to think of it," and he buried himself in the Sunday newspaper. As for the Spirit, he began to float out of the window.

" Where are you going? " asked the Human Being.

" To see my father," said the Spirit. " He is dying."

" And who is your father? "

" The Spirit of Nobility," replied the Spirit of Modern Progress. " And from what I have seen here he must be on his last legs."

If you will think that over, you will realize its deep significance. It will take all there is of us, all the time, if we are to develop that over which God has made us stewards. We must put the first things first. We must realize that only one thing counts supremely, that giving attention to that, all other things take their place and receive their real value thereby. No values are so important as moral values. If one doesn't like one's business, one can change to another business, but no man can move out of a structure which he is rearing for himself and which will last forever.

A man cannot refuse to take up the great tasks of life which constitute his real business, his high calling of God. Long ago Theodore Roosevelt said, " Men are talking about their rights and insisting upon them. What concerns men most is not so much their rights as their duties." " Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business," said the young man, Jesus, and later He affirmed, " My father worketh hitherto and I work." Hear Him exclaiming, " I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day, for the night cometh."

What will you have to show for it all when the sun goes down, or is eclipsed at noon? A few short planks in the windowless chamber of silence and death,—a line or two cut in the marble by the sculptor's chisel to tell of birth and death; an asterisk in your college catalogue, and the number of the fateful year beside your name! But what of a harvest out of your life to feed and nourish the world? Will your children rise up to call you blessed? Will your neighbours be saying:

> *"His life was gentle, and the elements*
> *So mixed in him that Nature might stand up,*
> *And say to all the World, this was a man!"*

To any young men who are listening to me, I should like to quote those thrilling words of Kipling:

"If you can dream and not make dreams your master,
If you can think, and not make thoughts your aims,
If you can meet with Triumph or Disaster,
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn out tools;

"If you can walk with crowds and keep your Virtue,
Or walk with kings,—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but not too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute,
With sixty seconds worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, My Son!"

Jesus saw a young man of parts and asked him my question in substance. He said, "Would you give up your position and your money and be poor, and mighty for good?" But the young man hadn't the sand to do it. He shook his head and went away sorrowful—his earthly riches made him an eternal pauper. He who might have been another St. John becomes another Dives.

Jesus is meeting you face to face and propounding the same question. What is your answer? What is to be your *real business?* Remember my text: "Never let your zeal flag: Maintain the spiritual glow. Serve the Lord."

XVIII

THE ECLIPSE OF GOD

"Without God in the world."—EPHESIANS 2: 12.

THE author of "The Renascence of Faith" opens one of his chapters by saying, "There are no atheists to-day, or if anywhere one does survive,—he is a great antique." Perhaps that is putting it a little strong, as there are some societies who boast themselves of their atheism. The good book says that long ago the fool said in his heart, "There is no God." But men have been increasingly cautious with each passing generation not to say it with their lips. The real unbeliever to-day is an agnostic. He says, "I do not know," and he leaves it there.

I have never been much troubled at a man's lack of faith if he is on the move. I have always felt that his doubt would clear away at last by the strain and imperative necessity of his struggle after a moral life. Sooner or later every man must realize that he needs for life's journey both an impulse and a goal and these are to be found, if history can be relied upon, only in the God impulse. I have found after a long experience with men that where a man had ceased to be a pilgrim in the path of honest seeking, it was usually because he was dishonest in his doubt and was using that simply as a cloak to hide a selfish or a sinful life and tried to ease his conscience by an attitude of mind which deceived no one who knew him and probably himself least of all. If a man is living a life that is a burden

to himself and humanity, why should he want to believe in immortality? If he is denying all the claims which God makes upon the human soul, why should he not seek to believe there is no God?

While we find little intellectual atheism, we find no end of practical atheism that has taken form out of a stolid and careless agnosticism. The trouble in society and in the Church is that so many have dropped into a condition of questioning and moral inactivity. Somebody has said that the coat of arms of America is an interrogation point rampant and two bishops dormant. I had ventured to say that our Patron Saint was not St. George of England, St. David of Scotland, St. Patrick of Ireland, but St. Vitus of America. I thought that was a conclusion which the last few years had forced upon us, but I was quite surprised in reading yesterday a lecture by Ralph Waldo Emerson, delivered more than sixty years ago, to have him say: "The human race are afflicted with St. Vitus dance. Their fingers and toes, their members, their senses, their talents, are superfluously active, while the torpid heart gives no oracle. When that wakes it will revolutionize the world." In that same lecture, he says: "Every movement of religious opinion is of profound importance to politics and social life." And here is a sentence from the greatest master of thought which America has produced in a hundred years: "Unlovely nay, frightful, is the solitude of the soul without God in the world. To wander all day in the sunlight among the tribes of animals, unrelated to anything better; to behold the horse, cow and bird and to see an equal and speedy end to him and them; to see men pursuing their varied action, warm-hearted, providing for their children, loving their friends, performing their promises—what are they to this chill, houseless, fatherless, aimless Cain, the man who hears only the sound of his own footsteps in God's resplendent

creation? To him it is no creation. To him these fair creatures are hapless spectres. He knows not what to make of it. To him heaven and earth have lost their beauty. I cannot keep the sun in heaven, if you take away the purpose which animates it."

What we are needing in our time is a few glorious affirmations to change the interrogation point into an exclamation point, where the marvel of God's grace and the love which stopped not at the cross would hush your questionings and bring you into life as into a great cathedral where the holy hush of angel music would entrance your soul. The reverent souls are those which look into the great open vistas where, with stars for tapers tall, they can see the city which is afar off and a path which leads to it through unshadowed spaces. And he whose heart is attuned to the Infinite can hear the music of the spheres as a background to the chant which the angels sing—" Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Heaven and earth are full of thy glory; Glory be to thee O God most High! "

An English writer has said, " Faith has been hard hit in our time by vague abstract ways of speaking of God." Transcendentalism is the creed of the dilettante. They talk about God as " a stream of tendency making for righteousness," as the " first cause," or " the life force." Can you imagine Abraham over Sodom, or Paul at Philippi or Knox at Edinburgh praying to that sort of God! James Martineau was right when he said, " You cannot pray to a First Cause, or cry O Stream of Tendency that makes for righteousness be merciful to me a sinner! "

In the Bible, God is the center of everything but in some quarters to-day, He seems to have suffered an eclipse. The progress of astronomy has been reversed. Once the world believed with Ptolemy that the earth was the center of our universe, but at last it came to be understood that our sys-

tem is bigger than this little world and Copernicus writes a new geography of the heavens with the sun at the center. It would certainly be a peculiar intelligence that in this day would go back spiritually to the exploded theories of two millenniums ago. It is a sad thing in human life when this little earth eclipses the sun of righteousness. The evidence of this eclipse is that so many among us have a habit of thought and a way of life in which God has no place. You do not go out with the hammer of an iconoclast, you do not vociferate that God is dead, you may even say your prayers, but there is no power in them; to omit them would simply leave a feeling of some routine that had been stopped. They play no real part in the development of life.

Nothing so shapes a man's life as the deliberate, conscious conviction that a moral God exists and cares. It makes even devils believe and tremble. You have to take sides. You cannot be neutral if you would. All the flaming, consuming enthusiasms of history have had God in them. The old Israelites, from Joshua to David and the prophets, fought for Jehovah. The Crusaders cried, "God wills it." Cromwell was not fighting for the Commonwealth but for God, when he cried at Dunbar, "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered." Victor Hugo says, "It was not Wellington but God who won at Waterloo." Mazzini said, "We must place God on our banners." Go down town and see the bas-relief of Washington praying to God at Valley Forge that He might guard our nascent Republic. The White House could tell you of Abraham Lincoln on his knees before God as the armies went to the fateful battle of Gettysburg.

If we are having trouble with our politics to-day, it is because the face of God has suffered eclipse. But the preliminary need is the need of God in the life of the indi-

vidual. First with this eclipse of God has come indifference. Right and wrong exist, but the rightness of the right and the wrongness of the wrong do not smite the man's heart. His decalogue has been reduced to one commandment—"Thou shalt not get caught." It looks sometimes as if the devil helps the thief high or low, month after month,—but some day God helps the District Attorney. It is the eclipse of God that makes the individual helpless and indifferent and unfastens his will from his conscience. Joseph was strong when he said, "How can I do this great evil and sin against God?" "I remembered God and was troubled," so the Psalmist cried. Why should a man be troubled when he remembers God? All his mercies are from Him. To remember Him ought to set all the joy bells ringing. His name and nature is love; His promises are wonderful; His mercies past finding out; "As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you," are His words. Why should it not make a man happy to remember God? If it does not, there must be some trouble somewhere. If I wrong a man, I cannot think of him with the least degree of pleasure, so if a man is not happy when he remembers God, you may be sure there is opposition in his heart to the things which God loves.

This is the eclipse of which the Apostle speaks, "In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them." If you should blot out the sun, this whole world would go to its icy grave in a day, every plant an icicle, a frozen world. Take God out of life and the same thing happens. Yonder man is frozen at his heart. It is in God we live and move and have our being. Out of Him, or without Him, we would die.

I received some little time ago a letter from one of our

leading magazine writers whom I had met. It impressed me so greatly that I want to give you a part of it:

> "Here I am at forty-eight without faith, a materialist, pure and simple; perhaps, as I sum it up not even an agnostic. I sincerely envy you. In the time of life when shadows are getting longer, when men I have known and loved are dropping out forever, when ambitions begin to fade and burst like bubbles, and before me is the blank unknown, the end oblivion, your faith is your lighthouse, while I steer into the blackness.
>
> "Let me say this, don't forget to tell in your sermons that in the end, when the dirty dross is stripped from life, religion glorifies a man. Not so with the other thing. The brute that is in men has no master save your Christ. In this I am saying what I know to be true, for I have thoroughly tried one side of life as you have tried the other.
>
> "Entangled in various nets of my own construction I can see no way out, but as a man of some honour I must make this confession to the faith of my father and mother, and to yours. I do it so that if your faith should falter, your zeal lag, you may be benefited by the experience of one without faith, without God and without hope."

Could you think of a sadder position in life than that? Could any success in literature or in earthly accumulations make a man happy under those conditions? I have reason to believe that a change has come in his life since then, and he knows now something about the kindling of faith. It is a dark night when all the stars have gone out. It is a sad voyage for the storm-tossed mariner when there is no sun by day and no star by night.

I have spoken of the eclipse of God. That does not mean that God is blotted out. Whether we see Him or not, He is still there. Whether we know it or not, His power has never failed and never will. He is only eclipsed. The moon may come between this earth of ours and the sun, and that moon, whose pale light makes the night glorious, may sadden and

darken the day by hiding the sun. There are many things in the world which are good of themselves, but when goods stand between us and *the* good, they eclipse that which is far better than themselves, and it has sometimes happened that the good has been an enemy to the best because it shadowed the soul from Him who is the Light of the world.

Have you ever been to our great resort by the sea where the thousands come and go, where the raucous voice of the crowds and the bands and the automobiles is in the air, making day and night hideous; and then when the hush of the late night is upon you, have you noticed what until then was unheard—the beat of the surf upon the shore? It had been throbbing there all the time, but you had not noticed it. It was beating just the same when the sailors fought at Salamis, when Columbus landed at San Salvador and the Pilgrims came to the rocky coast of New England. It will be beating just the same until the last star is quenched and the rivers cease to run.

In the crowds and the turmoil of life, we may fail to hear the beat of the heart of God but it is throbbing there just the same. Some day in the great silence of the soul, you will realize it. I wish you might hear it as you look abroad in nature in these glorious autumn days. You remember how Joyce Kilmer sings:

"I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree;
A tree that looks to God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray."

No wonder that he said:

"Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree."

Another poet has said:

"There is no unbelief.
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod
And waits to see it push away the clod,
He trusts in God."

As you look over the hills and valleys, you will see how the great Artist is spreading His tubes of colour over all nature. They make the landscape beautiful, as if the trees were smiling back to you the last thing before they turn to their winter's sleep. Small wonder that the Psalmist said, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork." But the revelation which He makes of Himself to the humble and the contrite heart is a sweeter, holier thing than nature herself can know. Whatever else happens to you, may nothing come between you and Him who loves you, your Father, Saviour and Friend. May He never be eclipsed in your thinking and life!

XIX

LIFE'S MYSTERIES

"For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."—I CORINTHIANS 13: 12.

THE chapter from which my text is taken is the Kohinoor of the New Testament, and my text is one of its facets. The greatest thing in the world is love, and this is the greatest chapter upon it. Some would think that the man who wrote it was about the last man to write on such a theme. They called him a logician. If you doubt that, read the Epistle to the Romans. He was a man of affairs. If you doubt that, read the Acts of the Apostles. The Church has known him all these centuries as the great apostle of faith, but he invariably puts love above faith, and he is never so compelling and so convincing as when love is his theme. *He* wrote this chapter, which is the greatest exordium on love that was ever written. He says there are three things that are going to abide —there is faith, and that is great, there is hope, and that is mighty, but there is *love,* and that is *almighty,* for it will still live when all other things have perished.

Nearly all his letters to the churches were love-letters. He is always thanking God for his friends. He loved the churches, but he loved those who were not in the churches. He loved his own countrymen, but he loved foreigners also. He said he had a debt of love to all sorts of people. "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise and the unwise." We talk of the passion of

Jesus. Paul knew something about that. His passion was a holy thing, it was "love on fire." Dr. Jefferson adds: "There is nothing which the world so needs as love. It is because of our lack of love that the wheels of the chariot of civilization drag heavily in the sand."

In the section of this poem on love, of which my text is the climax, Paul shows us the mutability of things. In his day they had a good deal to say about prophecies. The prophets of the Old Testament were in high favour, and justly so; but he says, "Whether there be prophecies they shall fail," and a good many of them did fail because they were misunderstood. "Whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away." Is there anything more tragic than the passing of knowledge? What men once believed, they believe no longer. We smile at what men believed and taught only a few generations ago. It was only yesterday in the world's history when the scientists said the earth was flat, and the Greeks said the moon was about the size of the Peloponnesus. Human philosophies arose and flourished and faded. Epicurean and Stoic are alike forgotten. Inventions go to the scrap heap. Go to the Patent Office in Washington and see how ten thousand inventions have passed away. The wisest and the greatest in human thought are only tent builders. In the morning they put them up, but before the evening comes, they "fold their tents like the Arabs and silently steal away."

H. G. Wells predicts that all our knowledge in the activities of a busy world will pass away, that the whole industrial machinery will go to the scrap heap and before long the wheels of commerce will be driven by invisible currents of power.

Everything is passing away,—passing before fuller knowledge and larger experience. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done

away." Humanity is on the move. We see the change even in nature. Our own bodies are wearing out.

How the friendships of life pass; how the old home changes! Where the crib and the high-chair and the arm-chair stood, all is changed. The crib deepened to a grave; the high-chair is set back against the wall; the armchair is empty, and at last the home is broken up. There is an old ruin on a hillside that I often see. It has a broken chimney rising over an old stone fireplace. That is all that remains of a great country home that dispensed abounding hospitality for a century.

Then the Apostle enlarges on the mutations in a growing life. "When I was a child, I spake as a child." We quote the wise remarks of little children because now and then they seem beyond their years and there is a quaint philosophy about them which inspires our mirth, but we do not hold them up as a standard. "I understood as a child." How limited is a child's understanding! "I thought as a child." The only things worth while in a child's life were time to play and things to eat. Judgment had not been formed, experience had not developed. The Apostle looks back at it and smiles, and then he says, "But when I became a man, I put away childish things." Lucky for him if he did. There are a good many who do not seem to be able to do that. We rise by the things that are under our feet.

"We see through a glass darkly." Those ancient metal mirrors often distorted the object almost beyond recognition. In life's experiences it is much the same. We do not understand. We are disturbed above measure; but there is hope in the Apostle's heart. He has had his troubles as other men do. There were clouds in the air. He knew the cold damp of a Roman dungeon, and the brine of the shipwreck. The jailer's bonds were heavy and the scourge was

doubly knotted. Doubts were multiplied and Agrippa sneered. The Apostle admits, "Here we see in a glass darkly," but his voice rings with glad anticipation as he cries, "But then face to face."

Life is a problem in process of solution. It is the same kind of mystery that a problem in algebra is to a boy in his first term in mathematics. Greek, Hebrew, geometry—what mysteries to the learner, but the key is somewhere that will fit each lock,—then the door will open. Mystery first, then partial knowledge, then to "know as we are known."

I sit at the feet of the Great Teacher. He sets the worlds spinning down the grooves of time. I wonder and cannot comprehend; the dark shadows fall upon my soul. I wake from my Peniel to go halting alone through life. I do not understand, but I hear my Teacher saying, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Mysteries made plain! I do not know how life and breath are connected. I cannot quite explain how the ruddy drops chase one another through my veins. Nobody knows how it is that God shuts into a bar of steel a power that turns night into day and binds two continents together; but who, for that reason, discredits the messages that are flashed under the sea, or refuses to use the electric light? Here is an acorn so tender I can crush it in my fingers, but let it grow and it will split a granite ledge. Yonder are grains of wheat; they have slumbered long in Egypt's pyramids, but let the sunlight and the rain go hand in hand and knock at their chamber door and they will brush from their eyes the slumber of four thousand years and come forth in rustling robes of green!

Paul knew all about mysteries and trials. There was one thing that troubled him. The "thorn in the flesh," he calls it. He wanted to get rid of it, and prayed hard about

it, but it never passed. The only answer he received was, "My grace is sufficient." In spite of journeyings, of stripes without measure, of friends who had proven untrue, and some who had promised him their support and turned back, "having loved this present world,"—he lost not a jot of heart nor hope. Other men have brushed their eyes and prayed for a clearer vision. Is there anyone to whom I am speaking who has not cried out in agony of spirit, "I do not understand. There must be a mistake. Is it my mistake or someone's else? Is trouble a part of God's curriculum or does the Devil let it loose?" How shall I be able to say with Bryant?

"These struggling tides of life that seem
In wayward, aimless course to tend
Are eddies of the mighty stream
That rolls to its appointed end."

And then the mystery of all mysteries!

With you I have looked into the great Beyond and listened for fleeing footsteps. I have wished those white fingers could set the eternal gates ajar that I might know whether the music of that other land was a hallelujah chorus or a miserere chant, but I saw only the falling tears on the face of the dead!

These bodies give us a good deal of pain and we fall over them into grievous sins, but we cannot think calmly of parting with them. The world is quite bad enough, but we are anxious to see how it will get on. We hardly expect to be young again, but we would like to continue to grow old indefinitely.

There are mysteries all about us here. Let us be wise when we face the mysteries of the soul. The Apostle says, "Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." The tops of the mountains may be covered

with mist but when I see the base and the angle, I know there is some point where the sides meet. Here we are in a time of uncertainty; laws of nature are broken, laws of business probability are set aside. You plant your seed with no certainty of a harvest but with some faith that it will come. But even in the mist, when you cannot see the next step and question where the path may lead you, do you know anything which satisfies the nature within like a Christian's faith?

Look for a moment at the last thought of my text: "Then shall I know even as also I am known." There is a sense in which it brings comfort to feel that sometime the dark things shall be made plain. We are glad to believe that Jacob some day will understand Bethel and Peniel; that Joseph will realize the blessed tuition of an Egyptian prison; and Daniel the ministry of the lion's den. Homer will find the answer for his blindness, and David for the loss of his little child. Some day it will be made plain why Herod heard the music of the dancers, and John the Baptist heard the grate of the iron hinges as the prison door opened for his executioners.

We have made our mistakes because we did not understand. We thought the earth was the center of all things but both Paul and Copernicus taught us better. The weaver of the marvelous Gobelin tapestries always works on the wrong side of the fabric. There are knots and useless ends and conflicting colours on his side. The figures in their beauty are on the other side, and one has to stand there in order to see them.

"As also I am known." Is that true? The hidden thought, the unholy purpose known,—the books open! Who can bear that? *We* have not forgotten, and God remembers at least as long as we do,—when our murder is out, if we have hated our brother, when the nameless sins

which we have whispered to the soul are known to all,—then there is only one thing that can give us hope. There is another book of remembrance which the Lord has promised to keep and of those there He has said, "They shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels."

The solution of life's mysteries is not by science but by faith. Of old they said of Daniel, "We have heard of thee that thou canst make interpretations and dissolve doubts." There is One, and One only, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Your scientific telescope only magnifies the fog. Let the Sun of Righteousness have a chance, and then look! Oh, yes, the one thing that never fails is the one thing for which God stands—God, who has wisdom and who has power, but who *is love!* and he that dwelleth in God dwelleth in love! All else shall pass away, like an unsubstantial pageant and leave not a wreck behind, but love never fails.

In our meditations together during these Sabbath Reveries, I have freely admitted the questioning spirit of the age, but I have felt that the only way to meet that was through a conviction born of experience. Men are not anxious to hear about the doubts of other people. They have enough of their own. Paul said, I *know* whom I have believed.

> *"Talk faith. The world is better off without*
> *Your utter ignorance and morbid doubt.*
> *If you have faith in God, or man, or self,*
> *Say so! If not, push back upon the shelf*
> *Of silence your thoughts, till faith shall come.*
> *No one will grieve because your lips are dumb."*

The message which I have been bringing you is one behind which there has been a lifetime of Christian experience, both in my own life and in the lives of those to whom I have ministered. Conscious of my own limitations and

imperfections in the delivery of that message, I yet reaffirm my confidence in the message itself, and as I come to the end of the Sabbath Reveries for this year, I say to you, as Paul said to his friends: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

OUR PRAYER

WITH happy hearts, our Heavenly Father, we come once more to present our Thanksgiving and to make to Thee our common petition. To feel that Thou art with us and that we have audience with the King turns the humblest home into a palace. To know that however little concerned about us men may be, Thy heart of love is yearning over us, and the heavens themselves are bending low and our faintest cry is heard at the throne of Thy grace. We know Thou wouldst leave the making of a world to rescue a soul that cries to Thee for help.

We have asked that Thou wouldst give us our daily *bread.* We would also ask that Thou wouldst give us our daily *thought;* something that will be food for our souls, something upon which we may feed and renew our strength. We ask, too, that our hearts may be opened in sympathy to the needs of all men.

Quiet our petulance and lay Thy finger upon our fevered lips. May we speak no ill of those about us. If we are first to see their fault, may we not be the first to tell of it. May we earnestly seek to find the good, and be quick to speak of it.

May Thy Gospel go forth "to set at liberty those who are bound." Some are in prisons. May their soul be chainless and free; though bars may keep them from human fellowship, may they realize His care whose commendation went forth when He said, "I was sick and in prison and ye came unto me." And there are prisoners of poverty, and pain, and age, and earthly limitations. Wilt Thou set them at liberty. Thou art the helper of the helpless. Thou art the refuge of the fearful and distressed. "Cover our defenseless head with the shadow of Thy wing."

We are disturbed and troubled by our limitations. We, who do not realize that we are in the hollow of Thy hand, punctuate our prayers with tears, but the children who are resting in Thy bosom laugh and play! Our sympathies are broad to-day. We are all of us before Thee—North and South, East and West, rich and poor, high and low, well and ill,—whatever our condition, we are all alike to Thee. Send a Father's blessing upon every one of us. Especially bless Thy Church. Make it indeed the Light of the world. Touch the lips of those who send forth Thy truth, so that they may send it forth in beauty and in power.

Be with us in our political and social life. Bless our President and all those who sit in the seats of the mighty; may they see that power and opportunity confer obligation and may they meet all their duties in the fear of God.

Bless our homes, and may our fathers and mothers lead their children in the way of Thy commandments. Bless our teachers and instruct them in the way of righteousness. Bless those who are seeking to bless and help others;—doctors and nurses, guardians of life and property, benefactors of the race, who give their time and money to help the needy and reclaim the lost. May they do it all in the spirit of Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

Now we are at the end of our ministries together for these glorious summer days. How many happy friendships we have made, how we have been drawn together by ties of mutual love and service! If anything has been said or done unworthily, wilt Thou forgive it and blot it out; but wilt Thou nourish every holy purpose that has been formed within our hearts and in the great Assize may it appear that in these days we have grown in grace and in the knowledge of God. We will not forget one another. We will still bear to the Throne of grace all our comrades in worship, and we will hold sweet and blessed communion with those whom we see not but whom we love. Bring us in Thine own good time to those fellowships which do not pass away, to those joys which are eternal, and Thy name shall be glorified forever and ever. AMEN.

Printed in the United States of America.